

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	06/10/2015
Unique reference number	SC397112
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Alliance Care & Education Limited
Registered person address	Brow Top Farm, Quernmore, LANCASTER, LA2 0QW

Responsible individual	Andrew Taylor
Registered manager	James Dawson
	Jade O'Connor
Inspector	Marina Tully

Inspection date	06/10/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC397112

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people make noticeable progress because staff provide them with good routines, clear boundaries and effective support and stability.
- They benefit from having positive relationships with staff and feel valued and cared for. This helps them to trust staff and accept their guidance and support.
- Their physical and emotional health improves. They attend all routine health appointments and are linked in with specialist services including, the in-house therapist, and child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS).
- Staff ensure young people's views are heard. Their wishes and feelings are regularly sought on all matters which affect their lives. Independent advocates support young people when required.
- Young people benefit from maintaining contact with their families and friends, despite living a long way from home. This is achieved through staff's commitment to ensuring this happens.
- A competent team address behaviour and risk well. Staff are teaching young people to manage difficult emotions more effectively. This is achieved through effective key work sessions and collaborative working with other professionals, such as child sexual exploitation (CSE) workers.
- The home is effectively run by a conscientious and dedicated Registered Manager. He leads the team well; ensuring young people benefit from a high standard of care and support.
- Areas for improvement are specifically in relation to the home's compatibility and impact risk assessments; staff training; and, ensuring staff consistently follow the home's policies and procedures.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must – 2 (c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. Specifically in relation to training on ADHD, sexual health and eating disorders.	06/11/2015
14: The care planning standard In order to meet the care planning standard the registered person must – (2) (a) ensure that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. Specifically in relation to obtaining sufficient information, prior to agreeing to a placement, to inform a comprehensive impact assessment.	06/11/2015

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- The registered person must ensure that all staff consistently follow the home's policies and procedures for the benefit of the children in the home's care. (The Guide to Quality Standards, paragraph 10.20, page 54).

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is managed by a private company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12/08/2014	Full	Outstanding
26/03/2014	Interim	Good progress
13/01/2014	Full	Outstanding

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Young people benefit from being cared for by a committed team who prioritise their needs and welfare. The manager and staff know young people well and have high aspirations for them. The team strives to improve young people's lives. Care planning is effective. Staff work diligently with social workers, schools and therapists to ensure young people benefit from personalised care. Young people's school attendance improves, which in turn, enhances their education and future opportunities. One young person has recently left school with seven GCSE's, this enabled him to secure a college placement to study catering. Another young person has recently had a poem published. Young people benefit from growing in confidence, believing in themselves and have plans for their future. Young people receive the emotional and physical health services they require. Staff support them to attend dentist and optician appointments, when they refuse to go, staff's determined approach ensures that they eventually attend. Good working relationships with child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS), as well as the company therapist, provides valuable support to both young people and staff. This partnership working is improving young people's emotional health by helping them to develop, and sustain, positive relationships, and to build emotional resilience. Young people feel settled, secure and well-cared for. A young person said, 'It has been easy living here. I'm happy and it is better than any other home. Staff always ask me what they can do to make it better and there isn't anything.' One young person, who was new to the home and still settling in said, 'Moving in was scary. Staff tried to make me feel welcome; my room was nice. I get on with some staff and can talk to them.' Staff build warm, nurturing relationships with young people and gain their trust. As a result, young people listen to staff and accept their guidance and support. Other professionals, such as, specialist workers in sexual exploitation (CSE), work closely with young people and staff. This regular and on-going support helps young people to reflect on their behaviour, identify risk and understand their vulnerabilities. Young people's behaviour is continually improving as they learn new strategies for dealing with difficult emotions. This is helping to achieve placement stability for young people who have experienced numerous placement moves. Improvements can be made in the assessment of young people's needs prior to	

them moving in. The manager does not consistently obtain relevant information, at the referral stage, to assess if the home can meet young people's specific needs. Furthermore, the home's initial impact assessment does not consider the needs of other young people already living in the home. This has resulted in two young people being inappropriately placed at the home. Consequently, these placements broke down quickly and their move was unplanned.

Young people's views and opinions are valued by the manager and staff. They regularly share their views and thoughts about the care they receive and make suggestions about how things can improve. This is achieved through regular house meetings and the manager's 'open door policy'.

Young people's social development is extremely well promoted. They enjoy a wide range of activities, such as, horse riding, go-karting, trips to the cinema and an annual holiday. This makes life 'fun' and provides opportunities to learn new skills, try new experiences and make new friends in their community.

Contact with family is fully supported. Staff ensure that contact is carefully arranged, in line with the individual care plans, and supervised when required. This is ensuring that young people sustain attachments and a genuine self-identity.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Detailed risk assessments provide staff with clear information and practical guidance on keeping young people safe. Consequently, staff identify and respond to risk exceptionally well. Staff receive on-going training on a range of safeguarding matters, such as, child sexual exploitation (CSE), e-safety and self-harm. Young people are being helped and protected by a committed and experienced team. Effective missing from home procedures are in place and consistently followed. A key strength is partnership working between staff and other safeguarding agencies. Serious concerns are routinely escalated to multi-disciplinary meetings; this ensures all relevant safeguarding professionals are working collaboratively. Furthermore, return interviews are undertaken by independent workers who know the young people well. This provides them with the opportunity to speak to someone they trust about the reasons they went missing, and prevent reoccurrence. Other safeguarding professionals, such as, social workers and the police, consistently praise staff's practice. A police officer said, 'What I like about this	

home is that staff go the extra mile. They work hard to prevent young people from going missing and provide them with a safe environment.' Staff are fully alert to the triggers and signs of CSE. Workers from specialist CSE teams, such as Catch 22, visit the home regularly and keep staff updated on recent findings and research. Young people are also learning about the risks of exploitation and how they can keep themselves safe when using the internet.

Behaviour management strategies are effective. Staff encourage positive behaviour through constant praise, reassurance and incentives. Young people learn how to reflect on their actions and develop strategies for dealing with difficult life challenges. As a result, risky behaviours, such as aggressive outbursts and self-harm are decreasing; which in turn, is reducing the use of restraint in the home. All restraints are clearly recorded, reviewed and monitored. Furthermore, the views of the young person are sought and understood by staff.

Safe recruitment practice is further enhancing safety within this home. Rigorous vetting of staff is ensuring that only suitable adults are caring for young people.

The home is suitably located. Routine health and safety checks is ensuring the home is a safe and secure environment.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The primary Registered Manager is on long-term leave. The interim Registered Manager was previously the deputy manager of this home. He has the level 5 Diploma in leadership and management and over four years residential care experience, which includes management. He is a reflective leader, demonstrating enthusiasm and capacity for continued professional development. The home employs a suitable number of experienced and appropriately qualified staff. This committed and stable team provides effective, personalised and consistent care to vulnerable young people. The manager takes a 'hands on' approach to the running of the home. He is fully aware of young people's needs and plays a proactive role in care planning. This was reflected in the positive feedback from social workers, 'the manager is very communicative. He provides me with regular updates; he's flexible and tries new ideas. His commitment is fantastic.' Young people's care plans are kept up-to-date, which ensures that his team know exactly what is expected of them. Staff are effectively supported through professional supervision and regular	

structured team meetings. This is helping staff to reflect on their practice, share their knowledge and continue to develop. Staff's learning can be further improved with training on young people's specific needs, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), sexual health and eating disorders. This will further enhance staff's knowledge and skills to meet young people's holistic needs.

Effective independent monitoring takes place monthly. The visitor consistently consults with young people; this ensures their views are included in service development. Additionally, the manager undertakes monthly audits of the quality of care provided. Regular service monitoring is helping the manager to identify strengths and areas for improvement; which are clearly reflected in the home's development plan.

The home has clear policies and procedures in place to ensure young people receive their medication safely. However, staff do not consistently follow this policy. This is specifically in relation to controlled medication. The policy states that two staff should be present during the administration of this medication. Medication records demonstrate that only one staff member is undertaking this task. Although, to date, this has not had an impact on young people directly; they receive their medication as prescribed and without error. It raises issues with the manager's auditing of staff practice in this area.

The home's Statement of Purpose has been updated. However, some minor amendments still need to be made to truly reflect the new Children's Home's Regulations 2015. The manager is already taking steps to address this.

On the whole, young people benefit from living in a well-managed home run by experienced and committed leaders. Attachments with young people are fostered through nurturing and supportive care. Staff provide a good range of opportunities to young people, which is helping them reach their full potential.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*.

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