

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	07/12/2015
Unique reference number	SC398391
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Options BESD (1) Limited
Registered person address	Turnpike Gate House, Alcester Heath, Alcester, Warwickshire, B49 5JG

Responsible individual	Richard Jones
Registered manager	Carina McLean
Inspector	Pete Hylton

Inspection date	07/12/2015
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	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceeds the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC398391

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Young people make exceptional progress in all aspects of their development.
- The care young people receive is personalised and reflective of their individual needs.
- Safeguarding and child protection is prioritised.
- Staff ensure that young people's risk assessments are comprehensive and detailed.
- Young people become increasingly safe because staff work in partnership with others to reduce their risk taking behaviours.
- The registered manager is experienced, knowledgeable and capable.
- Robust monitoring processes highlight the strengths of the home and reflect social care research. This successfully drives forward continual improvements to the service.
- Young people enjoy positive and supportive relationships with staff.
- Young people live in a caring and nurturing home where their needs are prioritised.
- Staff are exceptionally skilled and competent. They complete training that reflects young people's individual needs, keeps them safe and promotes their development.
- Staff practice and performance is effectively reviewed and monitored to ensure this meets young people's needs.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is part of a range of children's services within a private care organisation. The home provides care and accommodate for up to three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/03/2015	CH - Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/10/2014	CH - Full	Good
03/03/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress
04/07/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	outstanding
All young people are making excellent progress in relation to their starting points. This is because all young people are settled at the home and there have been no changes to the resident group since the last inspection. As a result, relationships are firmly developed and young people are settled into extremely positive routines. This has led to a genuinely homely feel where young people see themselves and staff as a familial unit and support each other. The staff team provide a nurturing environment where young people are valued, respected and encouraged to achieve. This is echoed by social workers: 'the young person has matured', 'really good relationships with their keyworker' and 'the staff are very caring to the young people.' Therapists working with the home have similar positive views: 'staff are very consistent and fair. They have a real nurturing approach', 'staff are always able to find space and time for the children' and 'staff provide consistency for young people in the home.' The progress of young people is very well evidenced in the home. The use of bespoke and detailed progress tracking documents ensures that all staff are able to record the excellent progress young people are making. Furthermore, young people are actively engaged in reviewing and recording their progress and effectively contribute to the process. This develops a sense of ownership for young people and also ensures that they are able to articulate their achievements and plans for the future. Regular key working sessions take place where progress and future needs are regularly discussed. Young people's files are up to date, contain all required information and are regularly reviewed for consistency and content. This ensures that all recorded details are in place and any concerns are quickly identified and remedied. Regular communication with parents, placing authorities and other involved professionals ensures that any concerns are quickly identified. Robust actions are taken to further support young people's progress. Young people speak very warmly of the home and their experiences: 'it's really good here', 'staff have helped me with my confidence', and 'staff really look after me. I look up to them.' As a result, relationships between staff and young people are strong and a key feature of the home; they are built on mutual respect and trust. A therapist commented that 'the home is a really nice place to be.' Educational attainment is very good. All young people are positively engaged with school and where they are post 16, are taking part in appropriate further	

education. This leads to a busy home where young people are actively engaged in positive experiences and routines. Progress, in relation to starting points, is excellent. For example, an education worker commented that a young person has experienced 'huge changes in their ability to communicate and socialise.'

Where appropriate to do so, young people are encouraged to develop their readiness for adulthood. This is reflected in the key skills that young people are developing. For example, young people are encouraged to plan, shop for and cook their own meals. This ensures that young people, where appropriate, are able to develop their own self-resilience and life skills. A young person commented that 'staff are helping me to be more independent.' Young people are also encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility with regards to managing their money. This ensures that young people are able to budget appropriately and work towards specific goals and purchases.

Feedback from placing social workers is extremely complimentary about the care young people receive. Comments from social workers include; 'staff encourage the young person to have a well-balanced lifestyle, including taking exercise, taking part in clubs, developing friendships and also time to have fun and relax', 'care planning is comprehensive and reviewed appropriately' and 'the young person is very settled and happy at the home.'

Equality is promoted in the home and the staff team ensure that individuality is respected, valued and promoted. Young people, as a result, feel able to express themselves in a non-judgemental environment where they have the security of respect from staff and peers. A young person commented 'I feel special here, the staff trust me and I trust them.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Young people are safe at the home and are kept safe by a vigilant staff team. All young people have up to date risk assessments that are regularly reviewed and updated. This is further enhanced by the use of bespoke plans that address the risk of young people going missing. Young people are involved in assessing these risks and the plans are shared with the local police. This ensures that should young people go missing, the risks are immediately considered by police and other support agencies. As a result, young people know that there are robust safety plans to support them and this in turn gives young people security. Comments from young people include: 'staff protect me and look after me', 'staff are always there to help me.'	

There have been no occasions of missing since the last inspection. This is because young people feel safe at the home and are able to discuss their concerns, worries and difficulties. The staff team are alert to changes in young people's behaviour and are proactive in developing support strategies. This is further enhanced through regular team meetings where safeguarding is discussed. The registered manager also uses these meetings to discuss how the staff team would react to different scenarios with respect to safeguarding. This ensures that the staff team are developing their awareness and explore how they would work in given situations. No young people at the home are considered to be at risk of sexual exploitation. However, the staff team are trained in knowing how to identify possible indicators as part of their safeguarding training.

Where serious incidents occur, the staff team take effective and appropriate actions. Referrals are made to the appropriate bodies and changes to risk management immediately implemented. This ensures that the service is reactive to incidents and that young people's safety and welfare is promoted at all times. Similarly, where concerns arise over members of staff, robust actions are taken to ensure the safety and welfare of young people. The registered manager ensures that all staff working in the home are safely recruited and appropriately trained in their safeguarding responsibilities.

The use of restraint is appropriate and used only where absolutely necessary. This is further supported by detailed discussions with young people following any incidents. The registered manager reviews these incidents and supports staff in identifying patterns and trends in young people's behaviour. This information is also used as a basis for reviewing risk assessment for young people. As a result of this analysis and evaluation, risk management is robust and regularly updated.

Similarly, the use of sanctions is appropriate and contributes to helping young people to manage their behaviours. A therapist commented that 'staff are very consistent and very fair. They have a real nurturing approach.' Rewards for positive behaviour are used frequently and there is an emphasis on promoting socially acceptable behaviour.

Fire safety is appropriately promoted in the home. Regular fire drills ensure that young people know how to safely evacuate in the event of a fire. Similarly, all required health and safety checks are in place. The staff team ensure that the environment is safe and appropriately maintained. This ensures that young people live in a home where they safety is continually promoted.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
The home is very well managed by an appropriately qualified and experienced registered manager. The last inspection resulted in one requirement and one recommendation. These related to ensuring the premises is appropriately maintained and young people's feedback is acted upon. The registered manager has ensured that appropriate actions have been taken to meet the requirement and recommendation. Staff are sufficient in number and on the rare occasions there are shortages, a small number of experienced staff from other homes in the organisation are used. This ensures that there are high levels of staffing continuity and that young people's routines are not unduly affected. All staff are well trained and current in their practice. The organisation provides a range of training opportunities and staff are encouraged to develop their skills and knowledge. For example, regular discussions about changes to frameworks and policies in social care ensure that staff are confident with what is required. The staff team was relatively new at the last inspection and have since developed into a confident and capable team. This has been further strengthened by additional training for senior staff in developing their management skills. There has been an audit of all files and systems in the home which has identified areas to improve. As a result, there have been significant improvements in the home. For example, the registered manager has adapted a published monitoring and tracking system so that it meets the presenting needs of young people in the home. This has enhanced practice and ensures that staff are current in their pedagogical awareness and skill base. The registered manager has also ensured that there have been physical changes to the home. Since the last inspection, the whole house has been decorated and young people enjoy accessing newly decorated areas that they have influenced change in. For example, at the young people's request, seating has been changed and is now more relaxed and homely. Young people appreciate the efforts. The home has a clear development plan and this is regularly reviewed to ensure that it is being completed. Furthermore, the views of young people are embedded into this plan. This ensures that young people's voices are heard and where appropriate, acted upon. Consequentially, young people are able to influence the running of the home and feel a sense of belonging. This further strengthens relationships between young people and the staff team. The home's statement of purpose is up to date and the aims and objectives are translated into staff practice. Similarly, the young person's guide is well presented and contains all required information.	

The registered manager ensures that high standards are maintained. Staff are appropriately supported in developing their practice through regular and effective supervision. Safeguarding is discussed within supervision and the any concerns about young people are discussed and where appropriate, actions taken. Staff feel listened to and that there is a commitment to developing their skills, knowledge and career progression. This is reflected in a stable staff team who work flexibly and proactively to meet the needs of young people. For example, where young people go on holiday, staff adapt their working patterns to ensure that these activities can take place without disruption. Where new staff join the home, there are effective induction processes in place which provide appropriate support and training.

The manager ensures that work with parents, placing services and other professionals is excellent. Regular reviews and updates are given and the progress of young people is shared and celebrated. Where concerns arise, excellent partnership working ensures that swift and remedial action is taken. Where the work of partner agencies causes concern, the manager is tenacious in challenging delivery. This ensures that there is no unnecessary delay in young people accessing support or services. Comments from social workers include; 'the staff are very good at communicating with me about progress', 'the staff ensure that the young person maintains links with important people' and 'care planning is comprehensive and reviewed appropriately.'

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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