

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	16 May 2016
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	David Morgan

Inspection date	16 May 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Declined in 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

SC398391

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The home is good because young people progress well. They continue to improve their social and practical skills and interact well with staff. They feel safe here.
- Staff give the education of each young person a high priority. As a result, each young person is achieving as much as possible in their education setting.
- The interim manager has sustained the service at a good level. He has maintained a positive and supportive environment for staff and young people.
- The property gives young people plenty of space inside and outside, with reasonable access to urban facilities. It has the benefits of a rural location and is presented to a good standard in most areas.
- There is very little turnover of staff. This gives young people a secure base on which to develop.
- Staff benefit from a thorough training programme, which addresses their need to be qualified. It also gives them the necessary skills to meet the home's statement of purpose. Additional time has been added to the induction process so that new staff are properly prepared to meet the individual needs of each young person.
- Staff sustain good relationships with other professionals and with young people's families. These provide an important framework for each young person. Other professionals feel positive about the service.
- Staff apply insufficient planning when preparing young people for their futures. This inefficiency means that some young people are not progressing as well as possible. Some staff are not sufficiently clear about how the placement planning process supports young people.
- The fire safety measures have been reviewed and altered. However, this is not recorded and is a potential cause of confusion in an emergency.
- The inside of the property is somewhat 'tired' in places. Certain matters require more urgent attention, and the outside is under-utilised.

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 persons 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 persons must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, to ensure that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe, the registered provider must ensure: (2)(b) that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. This is with regard to completing an up-to-date fire risk assessment and to training staff accordingly.	27 June 2016
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must: (2)(a) lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose. This is with regard to ensuring that the property is presented to a satisfactory standard. (b) ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate. This is with regard to ensuring that all staff use the placement-planning processes effectively.	27 June 2016
14: The care planning standard In order to meet the care planning standard, the registered person must ensure that staff: (2)(b)(iii) plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority. This is with regard to there being clear programmes of training for each young person who is preparing for independence.	27 June 2016

Recommendations

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

- Keep a note of the content and/or outcomes of supervision sessions and ensure that both the person giving the supervision and the staff member have a copy of the record ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.4).

Full report

Information about this children's home

A large provider of children's services operates the home. It has three beds for children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, one of which is for a resident who is over 17 years of age. The property is located in a rural area.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25 January 2016	Interim	Declined effectiveness
7 December 2015	Full	Outstanding
26 March 2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24 October 2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The young person who has lived here the longest said, 'I'm happy here. It's good.' His social worker supported these positive views. The group of residents is unchanged since the last inspection, and the staff team is consistent. This is the basis of their good relationships. Young people benefit from a high level of consultation at formal and informal levels. Their views make a difference to the home, for example, to the shopping arrangements, development of the huge garden, and the planned refurbishment of the bathrooms. Staff have involved the young people in discussions about the interim management arrangements. Consequently, young people have accepted the temporary manager well, and the change has not unsettled them. Staff and young people receive regular advice from therapists to help to reduce young people's concerns and to support them to deal with challenges, such as family bereavements and disappointments. This is effective and shows in the remarkable emotional progress made by some young people. They are now able to accept setbacks and changes of plans with a reasonable level of equanimity, given their ages. Young people also enjoy good physical health. Staff help young people to sustain and improve their relationships with their families, some of whom live a long way away. This helps to stabilise young people in the home. One young man is currently having more visits to his home area, so that he can eventually return there. The team is planning, supporting, and monitoring this carefully so that he avoids previous difficulties. The support provided by one local authority to another young person has been poor. Despite the efforts of staff to gain clarity and to address his rights, the lack of planning for his future has delayed his progress. This has also contributed to some drift in staff practices. Staff are not sufficiently coordinated or systematic in their efforts to educate young people about necessary independence skills, especially those young people with additional needs. Nevertheless, young people continue to learn new skills, such as taking greater control over their prescribed medication. They engage in productive pastimes in the community, such as sports, and have the confidence to try new activities. During the inspection, one young man was preparing his birthday party invitations, and another was experimenting with his new fishing equipment. Young people's educational attendance rates are very high. They usually attend the company school nearby and/or local colleges and achieve clear progress from their starting points. One is currently taking examinations and has obtained top marks	

for effort. Another enjoys attending college where he has made a number of close friends. One successfully remains in classes now without leaving in frustration, which is a major improvement. The rural location of the home means that young people require lifts to the nearest bus stop. Two young people are planning to get their provisional driving licences as part of their preparation for greater independence.

The standard of presentation of the property is satisfactory in most areas, although loose wires in the lounge, a damaged bedroom window retainer, an unexplained wire near the bath, and minor damage detract from the homeliness. The two bathrooms are poorly presented in places, so the manager has arranged for their refurbishment in this financial year.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people benefit from a clear method of assessing the risks that they face. Staff regularly consult other professionals, such as teachers and the police, to keep young people as safe as possible, while allowing them to take proportionate risks. Some young people have made excellent progress in reducing their risky behaviour. The measures used by staff have removed one young person's dangerous behaviour in only a few months. He no longer targets certain staff or acts in a racist manner. As another young person pointed out, this is a substantial benefit to that young person and the rest of the household. Consequently, the young person's social opportunities have expanded, and staff are reducing the precautionary measures. Robust health and safety precautions keep staff and young people safe. Since the last inspection, staff pay extra attention to training new staff in the fire safety measures. Fire drills occur routinely, but as a training event do little to improve the effectiveness of staff. The manager is considering using different scenarios and integrating the organisation's business continuity plan into future drills. The health and safety manager for the company has altered the fire risk assessment. This means that some procedures have changed, including, for example, the availability of a fire escape ladder. However, the records do not confirm this. This is a potential cause of confusion in an emergency. There have been very few negative incidents since the last inspection, which is indicative of the young people's good progress. Young people are not at risk of sexual exploitation and incidents of their running away are extremely few and of short duration. In such cases, the placing authorities provide appropriate support,	

which includes arranging interviews to see why the incident occurred. The positive nature of these circumstances allows children to feel secure and to thrive.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The interim manager took over at a sensitive time following the last inspection, when the service had declined in effectiveness. After a child-sensitive transition, he has ensured that the service provides young people with a high standard of care. Under his leadership, they have continued to progress well. Following her planned absence, the registered manager will return to the post in the next few weeks. She and all but one of the permanent staff team are suitably qualified. The newest member of staff has nearly two years to complete her qualification. The company also provides a good range of other training opportunities. The manager and company have fully addressed the shortfalls identified at the last inspection. In particular, young people and new members of staff now have substantially more time to acclimatise to each other. These, and other measures, have served to protect staff and young people well. This safe environment has also helped young people to develop their skills substantially. Staff have improved their attention to all new documents. This contributes to their good level of consistent practice in caring for young people. The interim manager has also improved the accountability of staff, as required, and recognised pressure points. As a result, co-key workers now share certain responsibilities with team leaders. In the same period, the company has amalgamated with another. Senior personnel interpret this positively, but it is too early to tell what, if any, impact it will have on the service. No immediate changes are expected. The transition between managers has had some inevitable consequences, albeit of minor impact on young people. Key workers have continued to administer young people's placement plans, but their effectiveness has lapsed slightly. Some staff are not clear how the paperwork affects their practice. The relationship between agreed targets and key-worker discussions, for example, is not always clear, and the tracking of progress via star charts is not persuasive. The new manager has maintained the monitoring of the home at a satisfactory level, as befits someone in a temporary position. The formal supervision meetings between staff and their line managers occur at the prescribed intervals. However, supervisors keep records but do not give copies to their supervisees. This makes it more difficult for staff to address any shortfalls in their practice. Staff take opportunities to develop their skills, which serves to	

ensure that sufficient competent individuals are available for senior positions. The current statement of purpose accurately records the staffing and other arrangements. The management of individual shifts has improved by placing team leaders on a different shift pattern from other staff. This serves to encourage consistency of practice between staff.

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 children looked after 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 that 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 whom 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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