

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	11 July 2016
Unique reference number	SC398393
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Options BESD (1) Limited
Registered provider address	Turnpike Gate House, Alcester Heath, Alcester, Warwickshire B49 5JG

Responsible individual	Richard Jones
Registered manager	Philip Elson
Inspector	David Morgan

Inspection date	11 July 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved 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

SC398393

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- This service is good because the manager supports staff particularly well. As a result, staff are enthusiastic, there are minimal changes to the team members and they provide a good service to young people.
- Young people have benefited from living here for a reasonable amount of time, during which they have established very good relationships with staff.
- Because of the thorough management and staffing arrangements, young people make good progress in terms of their emotional and behavioural needs, education and prospects.
- Consultation with young people is excellent. It has meaning on a day-to-day basis and leads to young people believing that their views matter.
- Young people enjoy living at the home. They have full programmes and enjoy a wide range of healthy activities.
- Staff support young people's religious interests well. They promote social diversity and help young people to understand world affairs.
- Young people increase in confidence and learn to value themselves. This helps them to engage effectively in education, be optimistic and develop ambitions.
- The manager and staff engage particularly effectively with young people's families and with other professionals. This makes the support around each young person as strong as possible, which is vital when young people return to their families.
- Young people become increasingly safe as time passes. Proportionate risk taking helps them learn important strategies safely.
- The service is robust. There are very few shortfalls and those that arise have minimal impact on young people.

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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
Keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it. This is with regard to removing the reference to admitting children with mild learning disabilities. (Regulation 16(3)(a)(b))	15 August 2016

Recommendations

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

- Judge whether incidents are sufficiently serious to make formal notifications.

This is with regard to reviewing what constitutes a 'serious incident'. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.12)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home may provide care and accommodation for up to two young people who have emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
9 March 2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
15 September 2015	Full	Good
20 March 2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
25 June 2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people enjoy a comfortable house that is located in an elevated rural position. They feel happy here. One of the current young people commented on the lack of facilities in the immediate area, which has contributed to her desire to move away. Nevertheless, the young people use a very wide range of community facilities, including sports such as horse riding and rock climbing. They also attend clubs and churches, and visit shopping centres. This gives them numerous new experiences and skills which they can use in the future. It has also contributed to their improved self-confidence and social integration. The location itself has provided each young person with an additional level of protection at critical times in their lives. Since the last inspection, there have been no changes in the group. Both young people have been here for over a year and one has been with the company substantially longer. This has allowed them sufficient time to establish very strong bonds with staff. They make progress from their starting points when they came to live at the home. Consultation between staff and young people is excellent. Young people value the formal meetings as well as the informal conversations. The manager makes it very clear to them what will happen to their ideas and links this well with their individual placement plan targets. Young people express their feelings about staff and the service clearly. They both plan to move away soon. One said, 'I wouldn't change anything here, except the countryside!' Staff work extremely effectively with parents. One parent said: 'The staff are lovely; they take good care of her.' Consequently, parents also learn new strategies to interact with their children. This collaboration increases the chances of young people reintegrating safely into their home areas and helps them feel emotionally secure. Young people have made significant progress with their independence skills, including self-care, budgeting and shopping. Delays caused by their placing authorities have been frustrating, for one young person in particular. However, staff address this by liaising regularly with social workers and ensuring that young people who are from distant authorities do not lose out. Where necessary, the manager considers escalating these concerns in order to protect young people's rights. Because of this work, young people look to the future optimistically. Staff and children receive important guidance and support from the clinical team. The young people and staff have benefited substantially from the close communication between them and the allocated therapist. The young people have matured emotionally during their stay in the home and learned that they can	

influence decisions. One young person demonstrated her progress well during the inspection by attending and contributing to the inspection feedback meeting, which is very unusual. Both young people are in good physical health and receive regular advice about how to pursue healthy lifestyles. In most regards, this is effective but receives ongoing attention, for example regarding the risks from smoking and illegal substances.

The organisation provides young people with a good standard of education. The school is nearby and young people attend regularly. One young person has recently taken examinations and both are looking forward to courses at college. They have learned to form ambitions and invest in themselves. Social workers are positive about this aspect of the service as well as all the others. Staff understand how well each young person is doing at school and provide additional support when required. One member of staff observed that there had recently been a welcome improvement in communication by the school staff. Staff supplement young people's formal education well through day-to-day discussions and key-worker sessions. These processes address personal issues and current events, such as the recent referendum. The team promotes social diversity well and is considering how to promote it in a planned way.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people say that they feel safe in the home and usually feel safe outside it. This is an accurate appraisal of their circumstances. Both young people have benefited from consistent boundaries. They know that they have progressed substantially and learned how to deal with domestic and social difficulties, yet the social pressures and temptations remain significant. Staff identify and carefully track the risks that young people face. This clearly shows their progress. By applying a proportionate approach, staff help each young person to test their new skills in real situations. This includes the controlled use of free time and supported attendance at events. Young people can now deal with difficulties far better than previously and are improving their emotional resilience. Both young people have learned ways to avoid social difficulties and to say 'no'. Strong and clear role modelling by the staff is a key contributory factor. For example, the young people receive detailed guidance about relationships and their own self-worth, which they articulate. The young people can be reflective now and increasingly do so without embarrassment. Staff keep the social workers and parents up to date so that there is a coordinated approach to each young person. Serious incidents are relatively rare although, for the purposes of notifying Ofsted, greater clarity is desirable about what constitutes a 'serious' event. This issue has	

minimal impact on young people, but is relevant to the ongoing assessment of the service by Ofsted. Young people occasionally put themselves at some risk, especially when they are anxious or in company. However, these incidents are increasingly rare, because of the greater self-control that young people apply in person and online. Instances when young people go missing are extremely rare and the likelihood of other people exploiting them is much lower than previously.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The manager started at this home in 2015 and has a suitable qualification. He has improved the home in a variety of ways, most importantly by supporting staff particularly well. Consequently, the staff are happy and provide a high standard of care to the young people. There have been no changes in the team since the last inspection, although one member of staff has taken the opportunity for a short sabbatical in another home. Everyone associated with the home feels positive about the manager's leadership. One young person said, 'The manager listens to me and I like him.' A parent commented, 'He does a great job!' The last inspection raised no requirements or recommendations, but the manager has made improvements based on his thorough understanding of the young people and staff. For example, he has increased and improved the methods of recording young people's progress. These now provide succinct and impactful summaries, which are beneficial to young people and adults. This also improves the regular monitoring that occurs. He has also made improvements to the means of obtaining the views of other people about the service. This assures the organisation about the quality of care that it is giving to young people. He also provides good support to bank staff, who are a vital asset to the service. The recent merger of the company with another has led to an intention to expand and improve the property. The staff are excited about this development. They feel that the team is sufficiently robust to make the most of it. The team is organised well and team members show a high level of competence. Their mandatory training and qualifications are up to date and completed within mandatory timescales. Staff are also undertaking additional courses with interest. One said, 'My training empowers me to focus on the young person's behaviours and helps her redirect them in a safer way.' The service operates in line with its written statement of purpose. However, the statement of purpose says that young people with mild learning disabilities and autism are accepted. This is potentially confusing for commissioners and social workers, because Ofsted has not registered the service for this client group.	

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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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