

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	23/11/2016
Unique reference number	SC399222
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Sharlene Vallance
Inspector	Jennie Christopher

Inspection date	23/11/2016
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

SC399222

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people make very good progress while living in the home. They have very strong relationships with the staff, who have an excellent understanding of young people's needs and how best to meet them.
- Young people are able to share their views and ideas with imaginative use made of communication books, pens, pointing and sticking of signs and symbols. This allows them to give their views on their care and make more significant choices.
- All young people attend school well. The multidisciplinary team within the home includes a teacher and teaching assistants who accompany young people to school as required. They can also provide teaching within the home environment when necessary.
- Young people feel safe in the home and are able to express themselves. They approach staff with confidence. They are supported to learn new techniques to manage their anxiety and distress and make great strides in developing new strategies for this. Behaviour is monitored effectively through the multidisciplinary team.
- Joint working with partner agencies is embedded in daily practice within the home and all plans are from a joint perspective. This ensures consistency and best outcomes for young people.
- Areas for improvement include: the acting manager needs to be registered with Ofsted; the home requires some redecoration and essential maintenance; consent needs to be gained for the use of bedroom door alarms, bedrails and viewing panels; the use of viewing panels needs to be reviewed in line with young people's right to privacy; the conclusions of child protection and safeguarding investigations are not always available within the home; and the statement of purpose needs to be sent to Ofsted once it is reviewed.

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
The registered person must notify HMCI of any revisions to the statement of purpose and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(b))	30/12/2016
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance; so far as reasonably practicable in the light of the child's age and understanding, the child is informed in advance of the intention to do the monitoring or surveillance; and the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d))	30/12/2016
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if the registered provider is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home. (Regulation 27 (1)(b)(iii)) This specifically relates to registering the person in day-to-day charge of the home while the registered manager is on secondment.	30/12/2016
The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular, indicate that full records are to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect and the action taken in response. (Regulation 34 (3)(b)) This is to include the conclusion of the investigation.	30/12/2016

Recommendations

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

- Children's homes are to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children; they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. In doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression ('Guide to children's homes

regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.9). This should include redecorating and maintaining the home as required.

- Where a form of restraint may be necessary as a consequence of a child's impairment or disability, the child's EHC plan or statement of special educational needs may contain detail about planned and agreed approaches to restraint or restraint techniques to be applied in the day-to-day routine of the child ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.43). This should include the use of bed rails.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and run by the local authority. It provides specialist and targeted care and accommodation for up to three children and young people who have learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
15/12/2015	Full	Outstanding
12/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
06/11/2014	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people make very good progress while living in the home. They have very strong relationships with the staff, who have an excellent understanding of young people's needs and how to meet them. Social workers are particularly complimentary about the dedication of staff and how far the young people have progressed. Young people identify members of staff that they can go to if they are worried or upset, and also to enjoy their company. The use of picture symbols enables young people to show which members of staff they like and who they would want to support them, when this choice is appropriate. However, young people also learn that they cannot control everything or demand who works with them. Young people are supported to make decisions on a daily basis, such as what food they would like for dinner and snacks. Activity planners ensure that their days are structured in order to reduce the risk of young people becoming unhappy or distressed. When a young person is able to manage this, there is greater flexibility over what activity will happen next. If there is an unforeseen change, staff use social stories or now/next strips to communicate the change. This was seen being used to good effect when a young person wanted a different meal choice to what was available and had to wait for it to be cooked. Young people are able to share their views and ideas with imaginative use made of communication books, pens, pointing and sticking of signs and symbols. This allows them to give their views on their care and make more significant choices. For their child looked after reviews, young people have picture books to indicate their views and photographs to which they have added symbols to show what they like or dislike. Young people have the opportunity to meet with the independent visitor in line with regulation 44, and they are shown a photograph of her before she arrives and her role is explained. When appropriate, young people access advocates and independent visitors. However, it is not always easy to find an appropriate match within the independent visitor scheme, so staff ensure that they seek and record young people's views regularly. All young people attend school as programmed. The multidisciplinary team within the home includes a teacher and teaching assistants, who accompany young people to school as required. They can also provide teaching within the home environment when necessary. Close liaison with education staff ensures that young	

people's plans are consistent and up to date, and that communication styles, occupational therapy and speech and language plans are used effectively, in all settings. Transitions are well planned to ensure that young people are as little distressed as possible when going to and returning from school. Equipment such as pillows and iPods is made available to reduce the stress on the short walk to school.

In preparation for moving on, transition files and plans are created which ensure that the staff in the next placement have a good understanding of the young person's needs. Transitions are planned sensitively to ensure that the young person is not overwhelmed or confused.

Young people engage in a variety of activities within both the home and community. These include youth club, arts and crafts, music and visiting local parks. They have the opportunity to access clubs independently when possible and learn new skills for adulthood. Records show young people learning to use pelican crossings and understanding the red and green humanoids on the traffic lights. They learn skills such as cooking and personal hygiene. Progress in these areas is clearly recorded and monitored through six-weekly multidisciplinary meetings, which include parents, social workers and education staff. Targets are reviewed and when appropriate new ones set. Young people have made progress in various areas, including sitting at the table, wearing their ear defenders and using the toilet.

Young people's health needs are well met by the staff in the home. Routine appointments are up to date and close liaison with the organisation's physical and emotional well-being professionals ensures that all health needs are managed. Medication is stored safely and administration procedures are robust. Young people are encouraged to eat a varied range of freshly cooked foods, and some of the young people's tastes have widened since living in the home.

Planning prior to admission to the home is robust. Close liaison with families and schools as well as any short breaks service which the young people have accessed ensures transitions are as smooth as possible. Given the nature of the home and the services available within it, most of the young people's specialist needs are able to be met as soon as they are placed.

Young people are encouraged to manage their emotions, and staff support them well through times of distress. Staff were observed to remain calm and use the agreed strategies for an individual when that young person was upset, including redirecting them to a safe place and using now/next strips to remind them what they are going to do. Incidents are robustly reviewed (including monitoring CCTV footage) and discussed as a team and at the six-weekly reviews.

Young people are mostly treated with dignity and respect. The only area of concern is the use of glass viewing panels in bedroom doors, for which there is no formal

policy or agreement. This requires further consideration regarding the young person's right to privacy, especially where the young person cannot tolerate the covering on the window. However, young people are treated as individuals. They are able to choose for themselves and have their own identity. They are encouraged to meet family and friends as appropriate in order to maintain relationships and an understanding of who they are. Photos around the home demonstrate that it is their space and their home.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people live in a safe and caring environment. Staff are conscious that it is the young people's home and do all they can to make it homely, while keeping individuals safe. Members of staff are aware of their roles in protecting young people and are clear about how to report any concerns. Responses to concerns about welfare are robust and reported to appropriate safeguarding professionals. Some safeguarding records, however, do not include the final outcome of investigations. The home is not risk averse and allows young people to take age-appropriate risk in line with their abilities. Examples include walking to school with staff support, using public transport and attending youth club independently. Young people in the home do not go missing from care, and staff are usually with them in the community. Should there be an incident, the local police have photographs and essential information on all young people living in the home. Staff are aware of young people's vulnerability to exploitation in all forms and bear this in mind. Young people appear to feel safe in the home and are able to express themselves. They approach staff with confidence. They are supported to learn new techniques to manage their anxiety and distress and make great strides in developing new strategies for this. Behaviour is effectively monitored through the multidisciplinary team. The home diligently uses information gathered from other professionals to ensure that their recommendations are included in plans of how to keep young people safe and reduce their anxieties and triggers. The use of CCTV allows incidents to be viewed, and staff only step in to support when necessary, therefore not crowding the young person in crisis. CCTV also allows incidents to be reviewed to determine how best to support the young person in the future. Restraint is used as a last resort and, despite there being a seemingly high number of incidents, most interventions are for seconds and guide the young person to a	

safe space or to release a member of staff's hair. The manager is considering other ways to record these quick and lower-level interventions, to make it easier to identify when a young person's movement has been restricted. The use of bed rails for one young person has not been assessed or included in his plan. However, there is a clear medical need for this measure.

Young people have access to the internet, which is strictly monitored. Their individual iPads have set websites downloaded, so young people can use them independently, but safely.

Young people are protected from avoidable risk by the regular use of fire drills and equipment testing. Pre-employment checks during the recruitment process ensure that only properly vetted people have access to the home and young people.

The physical environment is safe, with plenty of space for young people to take part in activities alone, or as part of a group. The home requires a redecoration and refresh, where paint is peeling or has been picked off, and wooden panels in the bathrooms require replacement. The use of viewing panels in bedroom doors and bedroom door alarms has not been agreed with young people, parents or the placing authority, but is included in the statement of purpose.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The home has been without a permanent registered manager since June 2016. The post-holder has been seconded to support another home in the organisation. The acting manager has appropriate skills and qualifications to lead and manage the service, but has not yet registered with Ofsted. This is a significant gap in which the home has been without a registered manager on site. It has not had a detrimental effect on the running of the home or the quality of care for young people. The home is mostly well staffed and resourced, with gaps in the rota covered by bank staff and a core agency team. Young people do not appear to be detrimentally affected by this and know all of those who are caring for them. A recent recruitment drive has resulted in two new permanent staff, who will start as soon as all pre-employment checks are completed. The home's statement of purpose is accurate and includes details of how other professionals attached to the home are monitored and supervised. However, an updated version has not been forwarded to Ofsted since May 2015.	

The quality of care provided is regularly reviewed through reports provided by the independent visitor, in line with regulation 44. The reports are clear, and have improved in some areas over recent months. The service manager liaises with the visitor to ensure that the information is accurate and the language appropriate. A new visitor will be taking over the role in the coming months and a more detailed template for reports has been developed. The acting manager has produced a robust summary and evaluation of the service for the last six months and has used this to identify areas for improvement.

Young people's plans are regularly reviewed along with their progress at six-weekly multidisciplinary meetings. It is noted if a young person is not felt to be making progress, and other plans are put in place to address this. Joint working with partner agencies is embedded in daily practice within the home and all plans are from a joint perspective, ensuring the best consistency and outcomes for young people. Targets and goals are clear and incorporate the placing authorities' plans.

Supervision is regular and all members of staff benefit from time working with their line managers. Appraisals are mostly up to date, and, where there are gaps, it is as a result of the change in organisational timing of appraisal and changes to the management within the home. Staff say that they get the support they require and can approach seniors within the team. They also say that the staff work effectively as a group.

Training needs are identified through supervision, and mandatory training is up to date. Seventeen staff within the home hold relevant level 3 qualifications and two are currently working towards these.

The home is run for the benefit of the young people, with their needs being held central to all plans. Records are clear and reflect young people's day-to-day lives. They provide a good analysis of their days and how they are progressing.

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 that 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 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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