

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	03/11/2015
Unique reference number	SC407790
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Post Vacant / Lisa Moores
Inspector	Mrs McMillan

Inspection date	03/11/2015
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

SC407790

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people are able to develop very positive relationships with staff who they trust.
- Staff value young people as individuals and are responsive to them.
- All young people attend full time education and have good attendance.
- Young people are encouraged to try new activities, join social clubs and develop their independence skills.
- Young people's health needs are met to a high standard.
- Young people's views are central to how the home operates.
- Staff support young people to have regular interaction with their families.
- Young people say they feel happy and safe at the home.
- Staff use their knowledge and understanding of the young person, combined with their safeguarding skills to protect them from the risk of harm.
- Young people receive consistent messages and support from staff.
- Staff focus on praising and rewarding positive behaviour.
- The manager has a good understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses.
- The manager is extremely young person focussed.
- The manager and staff team have developed good links with other professionals.
- The manager has challenged other agencies when they have not acted in the young person's best interest.
- Staff have undertaken training to ensure they are able to meet the individual needs of each young person they support.

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

Recommendations

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

- ensure all young people receive personalised care, which meets their needs. In particular, ensure young people's communications needs and the support they require are sufficiently detailed in their placement plans (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards, April 2015, Page 14, paragraph 3.2)
- ensure that the home's Statement of Purpose is young person focused and indicates how the home provides individualised care to meet the Quality Standards for the young people in their care. This includes further information on the home's approach to promoting young people's rights (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards, April 2015, page 14 paragraph 3.5)
- evidence how staff help each young person prepare to live independently, including practical skills such as cooking, housework, budgeting and personal self-care (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards, April 2015, page 17 paragraph 3.27)
- ensure staff encourage young people to take a proactive role in looking after their day-to-day health and well-being. In particular providing education and support to reduce young people's smoking or to prevent them engaging in substance misuse (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards, April 2015, page 34 paragraph 7.10)
- ensure that when considering new placements they fully consider the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of young people and evidence their judgement supporting compatibility with existing residents (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards, April 2015, page 56 paragraph 11.4)
- ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each young person and the arrangements in place to protect them. This includes ensuring all relevant information is contained within their risk assessments (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards, page 42 paragraph 9.5).
- ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards, April 2015, page 45 paragraph 9.30)
- comply with the non-statutory advice about the location assessment process, in particular that location assessments should be completed in consultation with relevant services in the area where the home is (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards, April 2015, page 64 paragraph 15.1)

- ensure that recruitment procedures safeguards young people and minimises potential risks to them. In particular ensuring all the required checks as specified in schedule two are completed (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards, April 2015, page 62 paragraph 13.1)
- ensure that there is a workforce plan in place. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards, April 2015, page 54 paragraph 10.8)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a private children's home that is part of a national organisation and provides care and accommodation for five young people who have emotional, behavioural and education difficulties and attend the associated residential special school.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/05/2015	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
22/01/2015	CH - Full	Good
17/09/2014	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
17/01/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Young people are able to develop very positive relationships with staff who they trust. They like spending time with them and enjoy lots of banter and laughter between them. Staff value young people as individuals and are responsive to them. As a result, young people build on their self-confidence and self-esteem. Staff know the young people well and understand their needs. This enables them to provide consistent care that supports young people to make progress in their behaviour, education and social skills. All young people attend full time education and have good attendance. The staff work closely with their education colleagues to ensure young people receive the support they require to improve their chance of achieving their education capability. Outside of school, young people are encouraged to try new activities, join social clubs and develop their independence skills. This has enabled young people to develop new abilities and talents building on their self-esteem and self-confidence. Through social clubs, young people have been able to extend their social networks and develop friendships. Regular attendance at a cadet group has supported a young person to make noticeable improvements in their maturity, social skills and behaviour. Young people are encouraged to complete chores around the home, which enables them to make a positive contribution whilst learning valuable life skills for the future. However, it is not always evident from records if these are being regularly completed which may affect staffs ability to measure progress in this area. Young people's health needs are met to a high standard and staff support young people to attend medical appointments. However, instances of staff addressing incidents of a young person attempting to obtain tobacco to smoke have not been recorded. This does not evidence that staff are taking action to educate and support young people to cease smoking. There has been some concern that young people are at risk of engaging in substance misuse. Although this has been identified, no action has been taken to educate young people on the risks of this behaviour enabling them to make informed, safe choices. One young person's placement plan did not provide individualised information on their communication needs as detailed in the speech and language therapist's assessment. This may result in staff not knowing how to best communicate with the young person which may cause them frustration and a deterioration in their behaviour.	

Young people's views are central to how the home operates. Staff value their opinions and provide regular opportunities for young people to share their views. The manager has ensured young people are included in decision making about how the home could be improved. This aids young people to feel valued and respected. Where appropriate, staff support young people to have regular interaction with their families. This includes regular visits home, telephone calls and the use of Skype. This allows young people to maintain their sense of belonging within their families.

When considering new placements the manager prioritises the needs and stability of existing young people. However, the impact assessments completed for new residents do not evidence why the manager believes the young person will be compatible with the home or existing residents. Staff ensure young people's transitions into the home occur at the young person's pace. They provide good support and guidance on the emotional impact of moving to both the young person and their parents to ensure they are well prepared. They also obtain information from young people's parents, social workers and health professionals to promote a successful transition.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
All staff have undertaken training in safeguarding young people. They use their knowledge and understanding of the young person, combined with their safeguarding skills to protect them from the risk of harm. As a result, there have not been any referrals made to the local authority designated officer since the previous inspection. Young people say they feel happy and safe at the home. Current staff are aware of young people's specific risk factors and are proactive in minimising these. However, young people's personalised risk assessments do not contain all the relevant information. This includes young people's previous fire setting behaviour or challenging behaviour towards strangers. As a result, their risk assessments do not reflect all the risks posed to young people or of the strategies to minimise them. This may affect newly appointed staff members' ability to protect them. There have been some incidents of young people leaving the home and not returning at agreed times. The home has robust procedures in place to inform staff of the action they should take. When young people are away without permission	

staff try to remain in contact with them, and are proactive in trying to establish their whereabouts including searching the local area. Often staff were able to establish the young person location quickly and if they refused to return home continue to monitor their safety. Over recent months young people's incidents of missing have reduced, this is because of staff's understanding of the young person, why they may behave this way and staff supporting appropriately. However, not all young people are having an independent interview once they have returned to the home. This may mean that the reasons why they left are not identified and future incidents are not prevented.

Young people receive consistent messages and support from staff. Staff focus on praising and rewarding positive behaviour and as a result young people are making progress in their behaviour. This means staff are not imposing many sanctions. Young people are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour this helps them to better understand their emotions and begin to appropriately regulate them. This is particularly notable in young people's resident meetings. Here young people have an opportunity to put forward their views on how well they have managed their behaviour and how they should be rewarded. Young people also suggest how much pocket money they should forego due to any negative behaviour they have displayed. This encouraged young people to take ownership of their behaviour and take responsibility for themselves.

Staff tailor behaviour management to each young person's needs and clearly outline their safety and supervision needs in their behaviour support plan. The plan provides detailed information into the reasons why young people present challenging behaviour and informs staff in how best to support them. Staff focus on de-escalation techniques and the development of positive relationships. Because of these approaches, incidents requiring the use of physical intervention are low.

Some new staff have not undergone some of the required employment checks prior to starting their employment. This includes obtaining references for previous employment with children, young people or vulnerable adults as required by regulation. This means their reasons for leaving these roles were not established. As a result, recruitment procedures are not robust to ensure that only suitable adults are employed to work with young people.

The manager has carried out all health and safety checks regularly and ensured that all appropriate fire safety measures are in place. This ensures that any potential hazards are identified and minimised.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The manager has been in post since August 2015 and is currently applying to be registered with Ofsted. Since coming into post, the manager has spent time observing and monitoring the service. As a result, she has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. There are still areas that need addressing however, the manager is aware of these and taking action to rectify them. Since coming to the home, the manager has developed a good knowledge of the individual young people and has an excellent rapport with them. They speak highly of her and like the consistency she has brought to the home. The manager is extremely child focussed. She is able to demonstrate the progress young people have made. When young people have not progressed as well in some areas she has ensured the support provided has been reviewed to ensure it remains effective. When other agencies have not acted in the best interests of the young people or have not fulfilled their statutory duties such as providing return interviews after missing incidents, the manager has proactively challenged this. The manager and staff team have developed good links with other professionals including education staff and social workers. When necessary the manager has arranged multiagency meetings to ensure young people receive the support they require and a consistent message from all those involved in their care. The manager has also established contact with local organisations and professionals. The manager is in the process of arranging guest speakers to visit the home and take part in residents meetings to provide education to young people on topics such as the prevent agenda and child sexual exploitation. However, it is not clear if the manager has used the home's links with the other organisations such as the local authority designated officer or the police to inform the home's premises review. Therefore, it is not evident whether the review considers local intelligence on factors in the local area that may represent risks to young people. The manager is in the process of redesigning the home's monitoring systems to ensure they are effective in identifying trends and patterns in young people's progress. This will support her in making improvements to the service. A focus of the manager since coming to post has been reviewing young people's placement documentation, this has included redesigning the format of placements plans to make them more personalised and accessible to young people. This encourages young people to become involved in their care planning and take ownership of their plans. The independent visitor reports are detailed and support the manager in developing the service. The home's statement of purpose outlines the aims and objectives of the organisation. However, it does not provide detailed information on how young	

people's rights will be protected. As a result, it is not clear from this document how the home promotes children's rights or whom young people or others can contact if they feel their rights are being impacted on.

Staff have undertaken training to ensure they are able to meet the individual needs of each young person they support. They meet regularly with the manager through team meetings and supervision. This provides them with the opportunity to reflect on young people's progress, review their strategies and practice with young people and raise any concerns or development needs. However, the manager does not have a work force development plan in place to identify how staffs development will be supported.

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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