

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	22/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC411616
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Calcot Services For Children
Registered provider address	C/o Haines Watts Advantage, 87 Castle Street, Reading, Berkshire RG1 7SN

Responsible individual	Harvinder Singh
Registered manager	Cassandra Stribbling
Inspector	Emeline Evans

Inspection date	22/03/2017
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	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

SC411616

Summary of findings

The children's home's provision is good because:

- Extremely effective relationships with a wide range of specialist services have been formed, which ensures a comprehensive approach to care and placement planning.
- Through the relationships and attachments being formed with staff, young people are beginning to make positive progress in many areas of their lives; this is evident in their emotional well-being, confidence and self-esteem.
- Young people state that there is a culture of openness, which provides opportunities to easily raise grumbles or formal complaints.
- Staff invest quality time with the young people to give advice on how to develop their own strategies in managing difficult situations. Risks are well understood by staff.
- Staff actively promote and role-model positive behaviour and relationships. As a result, young people behave appropriately and interact positively, both with each other and the staff.
- Young people spoken with stated that the progress they have made is due to staff being willing to help and listen.
- There is a sense of joint ownership, with staff being very passionate about achieving consistency and wanting the best for the young people.
- The manager is extremely child-centred in her approach and takes an active role within the home, both working with the young people and working in partnership with other agencies. There are clearly strong attachments in place between the manager and 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 the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
6: The quality and purpose of care standard In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard, the registered person is required to: (2)(b)(iv) provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6 (2)(b)(iv)) This specifically refers to evaluating direct work undertaken to ensure that strategies are effective and the aims of placement are being met.	28/04/2017
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation. (Regulation 40 (4)(a))	28/04/2017

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that a young person is engaged in suitable structured activities while not in education. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- Evaluate any incidents when children go missing from the home to ensure that there are consistently proactive responses. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.31)
- Continue to monitor and review patterns and trends of turnover of staff and ensure that the staff retention strategy is frequently reviewed. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.19)
- Ensure that staff can support and meet each child's needs ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52,

paragraph 10.5). In particular, managers should have clear oversight of when staff have received training in therapeutic ways of working and attachment disorders and other specialised training.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned. It is registered to accommodate a maximum of three young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. A therapeutic approach is taken in working with children and young people, with the aim of enabling them to return to their family homes, to alternative family placements or to move on to independent living.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/06/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
02/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
03/11/2015	Full	Outstanding
25/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Staff are constantly concerned with the welfare of the young people, and have successfully created a nurturing environment where young people begin to thrive. Young people are being well supported to build relationships with the staff team, and they are beginning to trust the staff working with them, and therefore open up and explore their emotions. Staff recognise this needs to be at a level and pace appropriate to each young person. Through the relationships and attachments being formed, young people are beginning to make positive progress in many areas of their lives; this is evident in their improved emotional well-being and growing confidence and self-esteem. This therapeutic community supports young people to begin to make sense of their childhood experiences. Young people are able to describe the impact that these attachments have made on them and speak very positively about the staff and their ability to support them and to keep them safe. Since the last inspection in June 2016, there have been three new admissions and two discharges. Both the discharges were moves on to 16-plus services within the organisation and were very positive and well planned. The young people were very well prepared for these transitions, and moved on together, having lived in the home for a significant period of time. The managers and senior staff considered carefully the new admissions and the impact of these: the impact risk assessments now used are comprehensive. Young people currently in placement are progressing well; young people are practising new coping skills, which they have developed through discussions with the staff about managing their behaviours and reflecting on their choices. Young people learn to be more tolerant of others and to live in a group environment. Young people describe the relationships formed as like 'brother and sisters'. They state that there are times when they disagree with each other but there are also a lot of other times when they have fun. Staff will challenge the local authority when education provision is not forthcoming, they make links with appropriate people and support young people to achieve and develop their individual interests. However, when young people are on reduced education timetables there is a lack of engagement, and staff could be more creative to engage young people from an educational prospective. Young people are confident in speaking out about day-to-day matters concerning living within the home. They state that there is a culture of openness, which provides opportunities to easily raise grumbles or formal complaints. Evidence shows that all forms of complaints or concerns are taken very seriously. Young people are able to speak honestly to staff and each other and are confident in doing so. This has enabled an atmosphere of mutual respect to be created.	

The aims of the placement for each young person are clearly identified in care planning and each young person has a self-development plan in operation. However, the impact that direct work is having is not evident. In addition, the frequency of this sometimes specialised work is not evident, or when and if any consultation with the necessary therapists has taken place. This needs to be enhanced to demonstrate that the personalised care provided is meeting the needs of the young people and that the strategies implemented are succeeding.

Young people benefit socially and develop new skills and personal interests by participating in a good variety of activities, which include participating in local clubs. The young people also enjoy day-to-day activities, including going on shopping trips and meals out as a group to celebrate birthdays and other achievements. This promotes positive experiences of family life and also positive interaction with the adults that care for them.

Young people are supported to be as independent as possible and will engage in practical skills, such as cooking, washing and budgeting, to prepare them for a more independent life. Staff make sure that young people are both ready to begin this and are then well prepared and confident about their future plans. This approach helps young people to make important choices and have successful moves on from the home. The support needed is carefully considered for each young person, with some work aimed at supporting young people to be independent in keeping themselves safe and to manage unsafe behaviours.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The relationships young people are developing with individual staff mean that they are beginning to feel able to talk to staff should they feel worried or upset. Opportunities are regularly given for young people to discuss ways to keep themselves safe and about the situations that may not make them safe. There are times provided for young people to reflect and understand how to make alternative choices. Staff invest quality time with the young people to give advice on how to develop their own strategies in managing difficult situations. Risks are well understood by staff and therefore they are able to recognise and respond well to any concerns. Young people have placed themselves at considerable risk since the last inspection. Staff take immediate action and work with all the necessary professionals to try to reduce any further incidents of young people putting themselves at further risk of harm. Young people currently in placement have gone missing and are at significant risk of child sexual exploitation. However, staff do all	

they can to ensure that young people are safe. A police officer, who works within a specialist team, stated that, 'Communication by staff is brilliant. When a young person went missing they went above and beyond trying to locate her. They do as well as they can at trying to keep her safe.' There have been some instances when serious incidents have not been notified to Ofsted. This does not enable the regulator to be kept fully up to date about what is happening in the home. However, other necessary agencies were notified.

The responses to these incidents of missing are well coordinated, and staff then consider how volume of incidents can be reduced in the future. However, there seemed to be a delay in recognising trends when one young person was going missing. There could have been a more proactive response in this case, and staff did not fully explore all possible interventions.

Staff actively promote and role-model positive behaviour and relationships. As a result, young people behave appropriately and interact positively, both with each other and the staff. Young people describe how they do get frustrated at times living with others, but have learned how to manage these frustrations and, therefore, in managing other sometimes disruptive behaviours. There have been occasions when young people have had disagreements; one resulted in a physical altercation and staff intervened. This occurrence and other conflicts have been managed well and are not perceived as bullying behaviours. Young people reflect on these and have learned other ways to manage situations when they are upset with another person. There has been a very low use of restraint since the last inspection, its use has been proportionate, and young people and staff have a full debrief following any interventions. There is good oversight by the manager, which ensures consistency and a reflection on how staff work with the young people, and consideration of whether any changes in practice are required.

The policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding are readily available to staff. Regular staff meetings, and group and one-to-one supervision, enable staff to explore issues and agree strategies to minimise identified risks. These are mainly focused on restrictions that may need to be imposed due to the present group of young people in placement. Strategies in place have been successful in reducing behaviours, such as alcohol and drug misuse. Young people spoken with stated that this was due to staff being willing to help and listen. There is little use of consequences (or sanctions) by staff; instead a focus on rewarding positive behaviours is evident. Open discussions are used to shape behaviours, and young people now understand the consequences of risk-taking behaviours and how this has an impact on their safety and their presence in the community.

Recruitment processes are strong, with more of an oversight by managers to ensure that they meet regulations. This ensures that there is careful selection and vetting of staff working with young people in the home. The home is physically safe and appropriately secure to take into account the needs of the young people. Detailed risk assessments are undertaken to promote safety, to ensure that there is

a safe environment for young people, staff and visitors.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
There is a strong team, led effectively by the registered manager. The registered manager has been in post since November 2015 and holds an appropriate qualification. She is extremely child-centred in her approach, and takes an active role within the home, both working with the young people and working in partnership with other agencies. This enables her to be aware of both the home's strengths and areas for improvement. Young people state that they can speak to the manager at any time. There are strong attachments in place, with the manager being totally committed to wanting young people to have the best possible outcomes. The whole team communicates a sense of striving for improvement. In recent months there have been a number of staff leaving and new staff joining the organisation; the senior managers are aware of the impact of this on young people, and have consulted with staff about their retention. Although they have looked at strategies for retaining staff, this needs to continue. There is use of some of the previously full-time staff as bank staff, which promotes some consistency. The home is, however, settled and staff pull together well as a team. Young people stated that the changes of staff have not had an impact on their experiences. There is a sense of joint ownership, with staff being very passionate about achieving consistency and wanting the best for the young people. Staff are enthusiastic and report that they are very well supported by the management team, both formally, through supervision and induction, and also informally, through the manager's open-door policy. They are positive about the range of unique training opportunities offered by the organisation and undertake regular training, which provides them with the necessary knowledge and competencies to fulfil their roles. There is clear oversight of mandatory training by the manager. However, this has not yet covered the wider development programme of the organisation. Staff report that they undertake training relating to therapeutic approaches and attachment disorders. Some of this will take place in their own time and some within the therapeutic group sessions provided by the therapist. However, there is no record of when staff have undertaken this training. The manager would benefit from having a better oversight to ensure that the staff team has the appropriate skills to support the young people in more specialised areas. Monitoring is used effectively, to identify weaknesses and ensure that clear actions	

are set. These processes are thoroughly evaluated and ensure that the manager has a grasp on the strength of the service and any areas to improve on. They provide a clear analysis of young people's holistic needs, progress and achievements.

Young people benefit from positive working relationships between staff and professionals from a number of other agencies. These include social workers, the local police, schools and specialist workers. Information gained from these professionals is cascaded to staff, to ensure that they have the appropriate knowledge to support the young people's needs effectively and are able to gain advice when required. The manager will challenge responses from other services that they feel are not effective. Young people are fully involved in all decisions in the home, and the manager and staff team act as very good advocates to ensure that the views of the young people are central.

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 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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