

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	05/01/2016
Unique reference number	SC412971
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Post Vacant
Inspector	Paul Scott

Inspection date	05/01/2016
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	Requires improvement

SC412971

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people live in a caring and supportive children's home that is making a positive difference to their lives. They are making very good progress in all areas of their development because of the support they receive from staff.
- Young people's needs are central to all aspects of care practice. Staff are familiar with young people's individual routines and maintain these on a day-to-day basis. This helps provide young people with stability and helps keep them calm.
- Staff take an individualised and coordinated approach to meeting young people's needs. They work closely with young people's family members, social workers and a range of professionals to ensure young people receive an individually tailored package of care. One social worker said: 'The quality of the placement is good. They are able to evidence how they are making positive change. They take on board everybody's input and draw on the skills of external agencies.'
- Staff prioritise young people's safety. They demonstrate a good understanding of each young person's risks, vulnerabilities and behaviours, including those associated with disability, and use well thought out, safe and effective strategies to manage these.
- There have been a number of management and staff changes since the last inspection. Some continuity of care has at times been lost while relationships are established but young people's needs and safety have remained the priority and have continued to be met.
- A number of shortfalls have been identified at this inspection. These are in relation to appointing a permanent manager, the use of restraint and how this is recorded, children's records and training for the home's housekeeper.

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 ensure that within 24 hours of the use a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes a description of the measure and details of any methods used. (Regulation 35 (2)(iv)(v))	04/02/2016
The registered person must appoint a person to manage the children's home. (Regulation 27 (1))	15/01/2016
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child. This with specific reference to ensuring a copy of each child's EHC plan is kept on the child's file in the home. (Regulation 36 (1)(a))	04/01/2016

Recommendations

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

- The registered person must ensure that all their staff have been adequately trained in any restraint techniques appropriate to the needs of the children the home is set up to care for, in particular that all staff are trained in the use of ground holds. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 49, paragraph 9.61)
- Where a child does not have an EHC plan or statement of special educational needs in which a specific type of restraint is provided for use as part of the child's day to day routine, the home must ensure that that the use of any measure is recorded in accordance with the recording requirement in regulation 35(4). This is with specific reference to the use of any mechanical restraints such as protective helmets and harnesses. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 50, paragraph 9.57)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities

and resources to support their training needs. This is with specific reference to ensuring that the homes housekeeper is provided with training in safeguarding, behaviour management, understanding autism and any other training the manager feels would be of benefit to them. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 53, paragraph 10.11)

- Staff, including the home's Housekeeper should be made familiar with the homes internal whistleblowing procedures. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 53, paragraph 10.9)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a private organisation. The home provides residential and respite care and accommodation for up to four young people with learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/02/2015	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
19/06/2014	CH - Full	Good
16/01/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress
06/06/2013	CH - Full	Adequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Young people are making significant progress in many aspects of their lives. This is because staff provide them with a high standard of care and support which enables them to grow, develop and explore their potential, regardless of the challenges presented by their disability. The views of parents, relatives and professionals are mainly complimentary and recognise the positive impact the home has had on young people's progress. A relative said: 'I feel that (Name) feels loved and all of the staff care.' They went on to say, '(Name) is getting better all of the time. She is more settled, and gets the life she wants and needs.' Young people have stability. The majority have lived at this home for a number of years and there has only been one change since the last inspection. This was the recent admission of a young person which was managed sensitively in some very difficult circumstances. Due consideration was given to matching their needs with those of the young people already living at the home. This ensured that their needs could be met with minimum impact on others. The social worker said: 'They were very flexible and patient and although they wanted a longer transition they worked very well with us. They put his parents at ease when they visited, which got them totally on-board with the placement.' She went on to say: 'I have absolutely no complaints and they have been brilliant. (Name) has made good progress in a very short space of time and I couldn't ask for more.' Young people are happy in their home and appear relaxed and content when interacting with staff. Staff are patient and warm in their approach and demonstrate a strong commitment to the care and safety of each young person. Some relationships between young people and staff are relatively new but are a strong foundation for young people to develop appropriate attachments. Staff maintain good links with the organisation's speech and language therapist who takes the lead in developing young people's individual communication styles. They make good use of a range of communication styles, aids and forums to enable young people to make choices about their day to day care. Staff are aware of the need to consistently facilitate choice and not make assumptions about likes and dislikes just because they know young people well. Staff practice is underpinned by good care and health planning. Young people are registered with relevant medical services and are well supported to access these, ensuring routine checks are up-to-date. They are supported to access needs specific services such as occupational therapists and paediatricians who have	

played a major role in improving young people's mobility and medication regimes. Healthcare is further strengthened by the availability of the organisation's learning disability nurse who is accessible through the school. Healthy eating is promoted and consideration is given to special dietary requirements when planning menus. Staff make good use of recreation and play to provide opportunities for young people to take regular exercise. For example, they will often go on walks in the park or to the seaside.

The promotion of education is a shared responsibility between the home and school. Staff always ensure that young people are up and ready for school and attendance levels are consistently high. They provide transport to and from school and remain with them in a supportive role throughout the school day, providing continuity of care and promoting good communication. Young people are noted to be making good progress with their education, relative to their individual abilities. An independent reviewing officer said: 'There is a good relationship between the home and the school. Education is a real strength.'

Staff use a range of recreational activities to keep young people active and encourage participation and social inclusion. They work hard to overcome barriers to participation and provide an array of experiences which nurture personal development. They clearly enjoy spending time having fun with young people, evident through the wealth of photographs which show young people doing fun and purposeful things both in the home and out in the community.

Every effort is made to involve parents and relatives. Well organised and safe arrangements are in place for young people to maintain regular and increasing contact with their families. Family visitors are welcomed into the home and were seen to be at total ease during the inspection. Staff maintain regular contact with family members which includes frequent telephone calls, face to face discussions and regular written updates. A visiting relative said: 'All of the family are encouraged to visit (Name). She is due to go on a family holiday and staff will be providing support for (Name) and the family. This is a good home.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Young people are safe in this home. This is endorsed by parents and professionals who are confident in staff's ability to keep their children safe. Risks and vulnerabilities are well documented and fully understood by staff, including the complexities brought about by disability. Effective risk management strategies are in place and are consistently implemented in order to maximise young people's safety. This includes high levels of supervision and the use of a range of	

mechanical restraints including protective helmets, harnesses and vests. These are approved by the relevant professionals and for some young people who have education, health and care plans (ECH plan), the use of such restraints is clearly identified in their plans. However, not all young people have an ECH plan which means when these measures are used they should be recorded as a restraint. There is not currently a process in place to facilitate this, something that the management team acknowledge and in the process of addressing.

Care practice is underpinned by up-to-date safeguarding policies and procedures. Care staff are trained in safeguarding and demonstrate an understanding of their roles and responsibilities in keeping young people safe and raising concerns. This includes familiarity with the home's whistleblowing procedure. However, this is not the case for the housekeeper who has not received safeguarding training for a number of years and was unclear about the provider's whistleblowing policy and procedure.

Staff demonstrate admirable patience and resilience in managing young people's often challenging behaviour. They recognise when young people are becoming anxious or frustrated and make every effort to diffuse any escalating behaviour. This is difficult to achieve for some young people whose complex needs mean that staff frequently have to physically stop them from harming themselves and others. Consequently, the number of physical restraints is exceedingly high for one young person in particular. This is not taken for granted and there is a clear focus on exploring and identifying ways of reducing the number of incidents. This is done in conjunction with the organisation's therapy team who apply a research based and analytical approach to identifying trends and patterns and developing behaviour management strategies. Although incidents are high, there is a clear pattern of reduction in terms of frequency and intensity.

The home currently operates two systems for the recording of physical restraint. The general records, which are used for the majority of young people, are comprehensively detailed. This is not the case with the second record which has been introduced for one young person. Due to the frequency of incidents the level of detail is significantly reduced. While the majority of detail is sufficient, simply listing the techniques used does not provide a detailed account of how staff have applied these methods. This does not protect the young person or the member of staff in the event of any concerns or complaints.

The majority of staff are trained in the application of accredited restraint techniques. However, this only extends to the application of standing holds. During a number of incidents staff have had to hold young people on the ground in order to keep them safe. Managers stated that the expectation of staff is that they would release all holds when young people go to ground. However to do this would place young people at a higher risk and therefore there is a need to provide staff with appropriate training in the use of ground holds. Managers were receptive to this and have already started to identify how this can be done quickly.

Young people live in a safe and secure home. Its location does not present a risk to young people and the environment is well maintained. Records confirm that all required health and safety checks are complete and that equipment is serviced within timescales. Medication procedures have been improved following a number of discrepancies. Management responses are noted to be robust when issues of concern arise or are raised by external parties. A social worker said: 'The manager and staff respond to issues and address these. They learn from their mistakes and change things for the better.'

A number of staff have been recruited since the last inspection. The principles of safer recruitment are followed; ensuring all staff are appropriately checked and vetted. This ensures that they are safe to work with vulnerable young people.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement
The home has been without a Registered Manager since April 2015. Suitable interim arrangements were made for the management of the home while the current manager worked her notification period with her previous employer. She took up post in July 2015 and submitted her application to register with Ofsted. However, she has subsequently withdrawn her application and will cease management of the home on 15 January 2015. At the time of the inspection the responsible individual was in the process of firming up future management arrangements. She is clear about the urgency to appoint and register a manager without delay and the implications that failure to do this may have on future inspection outcomes. Although the significant majority of the manager's experience has been working with adults, she has a comprehensive understanding of learning disabilities and complex needs, which is wholly relevant to this group of young people. She has a social work and learning disabilities nursing qualification and is in the process of completing the level 5 Diploma. By her own admission she has found the transition from social work to managing a residential setting to be a challenge. Additional difficulties around changes to staffing have further complicated this transition. The organisation has recognised this and over recent months they have redefined the management structure and made several changes to the staff team. Currently, there is a good balance of knowledge and experience within the team. Staff confirm that they are supported in their day-to-day role. They receive regular supervision and have their performance annually appraised. A number of new staff have been inducted into the home since the last inspection. They have benefited from a planned schedule of induction which has provided them with the	

opportunity to develop their skills, with the support of more experienced colleagues. Training is well organised and delivered regularly to ensure staff are competent in their roles. This includes safeguarding, medication management, behaviour management and first aid, as well as a range of needs-led training such as autism awareness and Asperger's syndrome. Some of these training experiences need extending to the home's Housekeeper. This is because she has regular contact with young people who are at times unpredictable in their behaviour. This has at times presented an immediate risk to her when young people have spontaneously grabbed her.

Rotas are carefully planned to ensure young people are given a good balance of experienced staff and newer staff are adequately supported. Attempts are made to match staff skills to the needs and personalities of each young person and this is improving as the team becomes more established.

A range of effective systems are used for the purpose of monitoring care practice and young people's progress and development. This includes rigorous external scrutiny by an independent visitor each month. When shortfalls are identified the manager and staff are diligent in their efforts to address these to ensure good standards of care are maintained. Young people's best interests are at the heart of the home's aspirations for continuous improvement. The manager and staff are receptive to any concerns or complaints raised by parents or professionals and take decisive action in response to these. They ensure good working relationships are maintained with parents and a range of professionals and on the whole communication is a strength.

Young people's records are regularly updated to ensure they reflect their current and emerging needs. They are well organised and provide a comprehensive picture of young people's lives and the good progress they have made. The close working relationships with school and the learning disability nurse mean that the necessary records are in place but not always in the home. For example, one young person's EHC plan had to be requested from school during the inspection. While this is not detrimental to the immediate care of young people, this is a primary document that should be available in the home. The responsible individual has already acknowledged the need to review how records are maintained in the home.

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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