

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	27/10/2016
Unique reference number	SC415400
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Gloucestershire County Council
Registered provider address	Shire Hall, Westgate Street, Gloucester, GL1 2TG
Responsible individual	Amanda Henderson
Registered manager	Vacant
Inspector	Wendy Anderson

Inspection date	27/10/2016
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

SC415400

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people are cared for by a well-trained and experienced staff team.
- The team is skilled at developing good relationships with the young people and their families. They use a range of different methods to communicate well with young people.
- Young people enjoy their short-break visits. They benefit from a good range of different activities and are supported to develop skills to help them in adulthood.
- Young people benefit from having personalised care from staff. In addition, their health-care needs are well managed.
- The home is effectively managed by an experienced and well-qualified manager. The manager is in the process of registering with Ofsted.
- Leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the home's strengths and areas for improvement. There are clear action plans in place.
- Young people's needs and interests are carefully considered when decisions are made about the groups of children staying at the same time. When possible, there is flexibility to meet the family's needs.

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:

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.). However, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. In particular, review young people's access to televisions. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- As set out in regulations 31–33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. In particular, the record of staff interviews should include an explanation of the scoring system used to decide whether to employ. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. In particular, staff should not use vague or emotive language when recording. Staff should ensure that work undertaken with the young people is represented in the records maintained and this should include an evaluation of the work. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children and young people, irrespective of gender, who have physical disabilities and/or learning disabilities. The children's and young people's placements are made under short break arrangements, and the service is delivered and managed by a local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
1/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
1/12/2015	Full	Requires improvement
16/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
19/08/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people benefit from being cared for by a well-trained and committed staff team. The team provide stability and have built strong, effective relationships with the young people and their families. This view was supported by parents and external professionals spoken to during this inspection. One parent said, 'It's a brilliant place. It's been a life saver for us.' Young people receive good support to ensure that their views are taken into account in every aspect of day-to-day living. The staff team uses a variety of communication methods to ensure that every young person has a say and can make choices. Care planning is currently under review. The staff team is involved in developing a new format. The current system ensures that the team is given clear direction on how to meet each young person's care needs and targets. Young people are supported to develop new skills for adulthood. Staff support the process of moving on from the home very well. Young people are well prepared. Recently, staff spent considerable time with staff from a young person's new service to ensure that the move was as smooth as possible. In addition, they spent time at the new service to settle the young person in. Young people enjoy a wide range of varied, fun and purposeful activities in the local community. This is a strength of this home. Parents and external professionals praised the team for their work in this area. Young people's healthcare needs are well managed. Leaders and managers set clear criteria regarding the level of healthcare that can be catered for at the home. Those young people who have specific health needs have clear plans, which provide staff with detailed guidance on how these needs are to be met. The administration of medication is thorough, with clear records maintained. Since the last inspection, there has been a lot of work undertaken to improve the property. Leaders and managers said that this work is ongoing. Currently, televisions used by young people are contained in a wooden cabinet with a perspex front. There is insufficient rationale about the need for these cabinets. The appearance detracts from a welcoming environment and is not typically found in a family style home. At the time of this inspection, significant building work was being undertaken. When finished, this will provide young people with additional communal space.	

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Safeguarding procedures and policies are suitable and adhered to in practice. Staff spoken with demonstrated a clear understanding and working knowledge of these systems. Staff are provided with regular training in this area to ensure that their knowledge is up to date. Staff have undertaken work with young people on acceptable and unacceptable touching. This has led to a decrease in young people being aggressive towards others. Recruitment practices require some minor improvements. In general, recruitment processes are suitable and are adhered to in practice, to safeguard young people from those who may wish to harm them. However, records do not clearly demonstrate how a decision is made about whether to employ a person. The verification of references is undertaken, but the information recorded about the information verified is not consistently clear in the recruitment records. There were two occasions in July 2016 when a young person left the home without permission. Staff acted swiftly and appropriately to safeguard the young person. They informed all the relevant people and agencies. This led to extensive reflection on the incidents, which demonstrates a culture of learning. There has been no recurrence. Behaviour is well managed by staff. Each young person has a behaviour management plan; some are currently under review. The home used to provide a soft, safe space that young people could use to calm themselves or relax in. The new manager has removed this provision. The main focus of behaviour management is positive reinforcement and praise. Staff identify that the young people respond better to this approach rather than giving sanctions. Physical intervention is rarely used. When it is used, clear records are maintained showing that the interventions are proportionate. Each young person has a detailed risk assessment, which is kept under review. These documents are supported by further risk assessments of the activities and the building. Currently, the home is undergoing building works, so additional risk assessments are in place to safeguard young people and staff. The fire risk assessment is comprehensive and supported by young people's personal fire evacuation plans.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
Since the last inspection, the registered manager has left. This post was filled in September 2016 by an experienced and appropriately qualified manager from the local authority's other short breaks service. She is in the process of registering with Ofsted. This manager has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the home. She has a detailed development plan in place, which has begun to address these areas. The recommendation from the last inspection, which was to continue to improve the environment, has been met in part by leaders and managers. It is repeated at this inspection because work is ongoing. Since the last inspection, this service has amalgamated with the other local authority short-breaks service. This has been well managed, which has benefited young people, their parents and staff. Leaders and managers have been carrying out a review of the home's records. The manager identified that in some records staff have used vague and emotive language. In response, she is planning to train staff to maintain good records. In addition the review has led to a request for updated documents from the placing authorities. The manager has also undertaken a review of the quality of care. The manager has identified that young people are making good progress, but staff do not consistently evidence this in records that they keep. Information from both reviews has been used to identify ways to improve the service provided to the young people. There is a clear action plan in place. Staff receive good-quality supervision and support. Individual supervision sessions and team meetings provide staff with opportunities to reflect on their practice and to develop new working strategies. In addition, leaders and managers use these forums to challenge practice and to develop staff individually and as a team. Staff are provided with good-quality training, which supports their development and helps them to care effectively for young people. The staff team has the young people's well-being at the centre of its work. Staff are committed to supporting young people and their families. Parents and professionals from outside the home praised the team for their work, especially their flexibility regarding the arrangements for their short breaks allocation.	

The scheduling of short breaks allocations is well managed. Leaders and managers carefully match the young people who stay at any one time. This scheduling takes into account young people's needs and their activity interests. As a result, they enjoy their short break visits. The home's statement of purpose provides a clear representation of the home and the work undertaken.

Notifications of significant events are made appropriately and to the relevant bodies.

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 whom 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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