

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC429995
Inspector	Vicky Johnson
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered manager	Donna Marie Thorne
Date of last inspection	27/01/2014

Inspection date	16/01/2015
Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **sustained effectiveness**.

The home was judged as good at its last inspection in October 2014. Since that time, the Registered Manager and staff team have made some changes to deliver improvement. Outcomes for young people living in the home continue to be good. The young people make substantial progress in their education, health, independence skills and emotional development. They receive good, individualised care and are protected by a vigilant staff team.

At the last inspection, three requirements and two recommendations were made to further develop practice. The Registered Manager has fulfilled all but one of these. The recommendation to amend the home's statement of purpose to describe the circumstances when the number of staff on duty within the home will change remains outstanding. This means the service provided by the home is not clearly described to young people and parents. This recommendation therefore is repeated.

The home has implemented a system to ensure that staff report serious incidents in a consistent way. Young people's social workers receive written reports following serious incidents. This good communication reduces risk to young people. Staff take the initiative and address any gaps in the young people's care planning information from placing social workers. Arrangements are in place to ensure staff bring out-of-date plans to the attention of the Registered Manager. This provides greater managerial oversight and makes sure the home have the information they need to meet the young people's needs.

Young people continue to make progress while living at the home and achieve good outcomes. The staff team invest in developing relationships with young people that are supportive and genuine. Key workers have sound knowledge of young people's strengths and can confidently identify the areas in care plans where additional support is required. When behaviours deteriorate because of the young people's

difficulty in managing their feelings, staff take a child centred approach. They provide young people the space to reflect upon their behaviour and support them to develop more constructive responses. This has resulted in an environment where discussion with young people is the usual approach and the use of sanctions is rare.

Feedback on the quality of these relationships from professionals is excellent. One social worker commented, 'Staff genuinely care about the children they work with'. Another social worker stated the young person had, 'Never been more settled, never had as much support in his life'. Because of these strong relationships, incidents of offending and drug misuse for some young people have ceased. Episodes of going missing have also significantly reduced within the home. When young people struggle to manage their behaviours, effective care planning and good communication supports a holistic approach to risk management. Risk assessments are robust and individualised. One family member consulted said staff 'did their best' to keep young people safe.

Professionals remark upon the staff's excellent communication, planning and ability to provide the young people with constructive activities. For example, the home will provide additional support to help young people develop their social skills, interests and confidence. These arrangements enhance young people's independence skills and prepare them well for re-engaging in education. Because of quality of the support offered by staff, the majority of young people have established routines and are attending education regularly. In some cases, this includes young people who have a history of disrupted attendance. One social worker commented upon the significant progress made: 'Without a shadow of doubt in my mind, he would not be in the place that he is without being here'.

The management team meet regularly to discuss the individual needs of children and to plan the future development of the home. This ensures the monitoring arrangements of the home continue to improve and the quality of service for young people is maintained. For example, on the recommendation of the independent visitor the Registered Manager has taken steps to extend the psychological advice available to the staff team. This additional support enhances the homes capacity to address the emotional and psychological needs of the young people.

The Registered Manager has improved the organisation of the information in young people's files. As a result young people's information is more easily accessible. Staff have also extended the recording of key working sessions to encompass the individual goals for young people. This structured and focused approach to recording applies to both planned and unplanned sessions. This enables staff to more effectively identify patterns of young people's behaviours and respond to their individual needs.

The management team discuss safeguarding practice in team meetings and risk assessments are updated following significant events. This maintains the focus upon risk management and ensures a well-coordinated and informed team approach. Staff

report managerial arrangements are supportive. One member of staff said, 'The support is always there'. Records show consultation with staff to gain their views on the quality of the support offered by the management team. This consultation reinforces management arrangements and ensures staff feel they have a say in the running of the home.

The Registered Manager has plans to develop the service to provide additional support to young people as they become independent. This will support a successful transition for young people from a service that knows and understands them and recognises their individual needs. There are areas of the home's practice however where there are shortcomings. With regard to E-Safety, the current policy does not clearly and accurately describe the controls and procedures for the safe use of Wi-Fi. It also does not accurately reflect the need for consultation with professionals and parents with regard to individual young people's internet access. Development of this policy is a recommendation to reduce the likelihood that young people will have access to harmful material.

Information about this children's home

The children's home is run by a private company and provides care and accommodation for up to four young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/01/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
18/04/2013	Full	good
16/10/2012	Interim	good progress
13/06/2012	Full	good

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

Recommendations

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

- ensure the aims and objectives of the statement of purpose are child focused and show how the service will meet outcomes for children, specifically the circumstances when the number of staff on duty will change (NMS 13.2)
- ensure that children's safety and welfare is promoted, specifically that the written policy governing the use of electronic devices within the home is updated (NMS 4.2)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.