

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	08/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC444289
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Pear Tree Projects Limited
Registered provider address	Peartree House, Bolam, Darlington, County Durham DL2 2UP

Responsible individual	David Bartlett
Registered manager	Gary Ramsbottom
Inspector	Michael Dack

Inspection date	08/02/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Outstanding
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection	
This home was judged outstanding at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.	
The management and staff team continue to provide an outstanding service to the young people. Although there has been an increase in physical intervention since the last inspection, staff respond appropriately, ensuring that the safety of the young people is paramount throughout. Recording of such incidents of concern remains robust, and effective evaluation ensures that the management team is able to reflect with the young people and staff respectively. This promotes good practice and enables lessons to be learned and, importantly, ensures that positive relationships between the staff and the young people are maintained. Young people are provided with a caring and dignified response, ensuring that their well-being is maintained. The recent Christmas festivities were enjoyed by the young people and staff, enabling further strengthening of the positive relationships and homely environment that the staff strive to provide. Contact arrangements for the young people over the festive holidays were supported by the registered manager and his staff. Where appropriate, the young people were able to spend time with their families and siblings with good outcomes, promoting their identity and rights to family life. The registered manager and staff are proactive in their approach to ensuring that young people's health is promoted. Reduction in medication, in accordance with clear diagnosis and health promotion, has been brought about through direct intervention and advocacy by the staff. Working in partnership with other professionals, the staff team enhances and promotes young people's life experiences, and instils confidence in their presentation. The young people have come from a variety of backgrounds where, in some cases, they have experienced sexual exploitation and high levels of trauma. They are helped to understand what exploitation is, and that it is not appropriate. Past traumas have a significant impact on the emotional state and behaviour of the young people at times of stress. The registered manager and the staff team are very good at maintaining high levels of supervision and adhering to robust risk assessments. Positive opportunities for the young people to experience levels of	

independence and social engagement are promoted and provided.

These opportunities are implemented and documented in case records, and follow risk assessments that continually evolve. This provides young people with opportunities to go to local clubs, participate in groups, and make visits to town, all supported through various levels of supervision. Plans are in place to enable young people to develop their confidence further through independent travel. Reaching this stage involves small steps that are initiated by the staff through a series of safe care conversations with the young people, social workers and family members. This measured process enables the young people to feel safe and respected, providing them with confidence through praise and self-reflection.

The comprehensive records maintained within the home that significantly involve the young people in their development and recovery are of a very high standard. Attention to detail and due care are promoted by the management team. It is important to note that the management team is currently involved in transferring all records to an electronic system. It is inevitable that there will be, and already have been, 'niggles' during this transition. The manager is ensuring that the team is supported to understand and facilitate the introduction of this system. On observation, the system is impressive, but clearly has steps to go through before it is functioning in the way the organisation wishes. One social worker who was very positive about the care being provided said: 'The only issue currently is there appears to be a blip within the new communication/electronic system. However, the registered manager has backed this up through emails, securely.' The system enables records showing the day-to-day activities of the young people to be shared with professionals, which will promote and enhance decision-making in a timely manner. Formulation of reports should therefore promote the efficient provision of services to young people.

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private organisation and is registered for the care and accommodation of up to four children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, learning difficulties or mental disorders.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/11/2016	Full	Outstanding
07/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
22/12/2015	Full	Good
09/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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 recommendation(s):

- Some records may be kept electronically (Regulation 38), provided that this information can be easily accessible by anyone with a legitimate need to view it and, if required, be reproduced in a legible form. In particular, transfer of records to electronic formats is carried out in a timely manner to avoid any unnecessary impact upon case records. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 14.2)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection 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

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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