

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC444289
Inspector	Michele Hargan
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Pear Tree Projects Limited
Registered person address	Toy Top Farm Houghton Bank, Heighington Darlington County Durham DL2 2UQ
Responsible individual	David Anthony John Bartlett
Registered manager	Gary Ramsbottom
Date of last inspection	17/10/2014

Inspection date	09/03/2015
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Previous inspection	good
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 **improved effectiveness**.

One requirement and four recommendations from the previous inspection have been appropriately addressed. The Registered Manager keeps up to date with developments in practice through training about the impact of trauma on child development and attachment behaviour. A senior member of staff said about this, 'We have added information about attachment into our recovery and intervention programme'. Increasing staffs understanding about children's underlying needs promotes care practice tailored to the individual needs of children.

Staff who impose sanctions are clearly identified and the effectiveness of the measure is now clear within the sanctions log. As a result any themes or trends relating to sanctions are more readily identified. Ensuring information about the use of sanctions and the impact promotes more accurate evaluation of these measures in the best interests of young people. Staff use an accredited physical intervention approach to restrain young people as a last resort; this is in response to behaviour that puts an individual young person or others at risk of significant harm. This approach protects the rights of children and promotes staff accountability. Young people witnessing the restraint of another young person are unclear about what support is available to them following such an incident. This can reinforce young people's previous experiences of trauma and raise anxieties about how re-establish relationships with those involved in carrying out the restraint. One recommendation is made regarding this.

Young people no longer sign house meetings minutes, reports for their looked after reviews or logs showing their participation in fire drills. Young people said about requests to sign other documents including pocket money logs 'it's a waste of time.' Requiring children to sign documents simply because they live in children's home distinguishes them from their peers.

The Registered Manager seeks the views of children's parents and their carers about the quality of care their children receive within the home. This approach increases understanding between staff and children's families about their previous and current experiences. It also enables staff to better understand children's backgrounds and family cultures enabling them to respond to children's development needs more effectively. Staff are effective at partnership working with doctors; this means young people's medication is reviewed sometimes leading to its being discontinued. This approach promotes increased physical wellbeing as young people no longer take medication when it is no longer necessary.

Staff encourage young people to maintain contact when it is in their best interests; as a result young people and their families spend time together doing important ordinary activities together. A young person said, 'I really like to go shopping for clothes with my nana.' This approach preserves young person's sense of belonging within their families and also meets their development needs.

Staff work well with social workers to introduce young people to the home and assess their suitability prior to their placement. A social worker said, 'There was a lot of planning that took place ...numerous meetings with the home took place, it went really well.' This approach increases the understanding of those responsible for placing young people and promotes placement stability for young people.

Staff recognise that young people can express underlying anxious feelings through challenging behaviours; as a result staff raise these concerns with social workers. This means young people receive effective help with addressing uncertainties such as where they will reside in the future. Young people's self-esteem and confidence is improved because of effective support from staff enabling them make the transition from an in house specialist education to mainstream school. A young person said about this, 'It's in my care plan...."Things to be proud of", going to school is one of the best things.' As a result this promotes better educational outcomes for young people.

Staff know how to advocate on behalf of young people to ensure they can access mental health services appropriately. This means staff adapt their approach to meet young people's individual needs at times of increased vulnerability. Staff said, 'we give the young person more spacesometimes on his own by providing him with more one to one support.' This approach builds trust between staff and young people and helps young people learn how to regulate difficult feelings.

The Registered Manager ensures young people know how to raise complaints and when they do these are taken seriously and promptly responded to. This approach recognises the rights of young people and promotes a culture in which young people are open about their concerns.

Information about this children's home

The home accommodates up to four children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a private company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/10/2014	Full	good
20/01/2014	Interim	good progress
13/08/2013	Full	good
19/12/2012	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 all children and staff are given an opportunity to discuss incidents of restraint they have been involved in, witnessed or been affected by, within a relevant adult. (NMS 3.17)

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.