

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	11/01/2017
Unique reference number	SC453372
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Gary Snaith
Inspector	Debbie White

Inspection date	11/01/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Inadequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	Compliance notice issued 6 December 2016
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

SC453372

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The children and young people have progressed from their starting point and they continue to thrive as a direct result of living at this children's home. They have very good relationships with the staff, and they are regularly consulted about their views, wishes and aspirations.
- The staff are very good at providing individualised support. Meaningful key-worker sessions provide many opportunities for the children and young people to talk about any worries they may have. The children and young people have access to all the services they need, including specialist services. The children and young people are healthy and their medical needs are met.
- Since the last inspection, the staff and the young people have worked together to develop child-friendly residential care plans. These are of a high standard, and show that the children and young people are actively involved in important decisions in their lives.
- Overall, educational outcomes are good. Most of the children and young people have 100% school attendance, and they are achieving their potential. When young people struggle with attending school, they are exceedingly well supported by the staff to re-engage with their education.
- The children and young people are safe, and staff manage behaviour in a positive, constructive way. Risk-management is good, and the children and young people live in a safe environment.
- Since the last inspection, leaders and managers have strived to improve the home's operation and the outcomes for the children and young people. They have met a compliance notice, and the previous requirements and recommendations.
- There are some shortfalls in the staffing of the children's home. The current complement of staff is not sufficient to meet the care hours required by the children and young people. The registered manager has not always planned the staff rota properly to ensure that all new staff work with staff who are experienced.
- There is no system in place to ensure that a written log is available for staff to sign when they start and finish their shifts. Additionally, the children and young people and the staff do not sign themselves in and out when they spend time away from the children's home.

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
13. In order to meet the leadership and management standard, with particular reference to the home's staffing complement, the registered person must ensure that: (2)(d) the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child.	31/01/2017

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that those with a leadership and management role be visible and accessible to staff and able to deliver their management responsibilities. Any registered manager employed in the home should have sufficient capacity to ensure that the quality standards are met for each child and young person in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.7)
- Ensure that the registered person oversees the welfare of the children and young people in their care. In particular, ensure that a written log is kept when the children and young people, and staff, leave and return to the home and when the staff start and finish their shifts. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.23)
- Ensure that staffing is planned to meet the needs of the children and young people. In particular, ensure that new staff work alongside experienced staff until they have been assessed as being competent to fulfil their role. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.15)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The children's home provides care and accommodation for four children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a private provider.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/11/2016	Full	Inadequate
01/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
03/11/2015	Full	Good
25/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children and young people are valued and supported. They consistently receive good-quality, individualised care that meets their needs. As a result, the children and young people are making very good progress. They are achieving their potential and are thriving. Living at this children's home has directly influenced many positive changes in the lives of the children and young people. A social worker said, '[Name] is a very complex child. The staff work closely with me and this is very effective. This is the most settled [name] has been in the last year; she is making very good progress. Living here meets [name's] needs and wishes. The care is excellent.' Consultation is a strength. The children and young people are actively involved in all aspects of their lives, and they are included in important decisions that affect them. The staff's calm, reassuring attitudes are attractive to the children and young people, and their patience and empathy is first class. Since the last inspection, the children and young people have worked with the staff to review and update the residential care plans. They have been instrumental in making the new plans more child-friendly and meaningful. The children and young people have designed and implemented their new plans, and they are actively contributing to what they feel their needs are and how these should be met. This involvement of the children and young people is innovative and inspiring. A young person said, 'I love my new plans and I designed some of it. They are much better than the old ones because we did them. We have all made scrapbooks that we put our photographs and memories in. These are ours and we can take them with us when we leave. It's been great doing this; I know my plans because I have written them.' The staff have a genuine affection for the children and young people. They are very nurturing and committed to their role. The staff consistently see the positive aspects in each child and young person, and they go over and above expectations to enhance the outcomes of the children and young people. Relationships are very respectful, which has contributed to the children and young people feeling they can talk to the staff 'about anything'. This helps the children and young people to form positive bonds, and to invest their trust in the adults who care for them. A young person said, 'What is the best thing about the home? It is the staff. They treat you like normal, and they really do care. I can talk to them about anything. I	

trust them, and they make this place a proper home. They will do anything for you. This home is not like other places; I want to stay here forever.'

The children and young people are very healthy, and their health needs are met. They access the services they need, including specialist healthcare services. Meals are healthy and nutritious, and the children and young people enjoy an active lifestyle. Their activities include horse riding, playing rugby, walking and other outdoor pursuits. The children are very much part of their local community, and they have made friends locally. This promotes inclusion, and enables the children and young people to forge local links.

A child said, 'I have friends around here; I go to their house and they come here. My friends were made to feel welcome; it's just like home.'

Educational outcomes are good. The staff act as good parents, and they support the children and young people in school and in after-school activities. They attend parents evening and other events. They actively encourage any child or young person who struggles with school. This helps the children and young people to achieve their maximum potential.

A young person said, '[Name] came with me when I had to go to school. I had not been before and I did not know anybody. We both sat in the car and I did not think I could go in, but [name] came with me and made sure I was okay. I don't think I would have gone in without her.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Safeguarding outcomes for the children and young people have improved significantly due to the registered person meeting the requirements of a compliance notice. Recruitment practice is greatly improved. The registered manager is now clear that all staff must have written references, and that these must be verified. The recruitment policy has been updated to ensure that all staff know what checks must be made before a new member of staff can start working in the home. There are improved systems to make sure all staff have an up-to-date police check, and these are renewed regularly. These measures keep children safe and protect them from having contact with unsuitable carers. A visiting professional said, 'We have been working closely with the home and they have really come along. Our young people love it here and want to stay. The	

manager has responded positively to our help and has made a lot of improvements.'

The children and young people are safe, and the staff understand that every child and young person's welfare is paramount. All child protection training is up-to-date and the staff know what to do if they are worried or concerned about a child or young person. There are robust procedures in place to respond to children and young people who go missing. Good relationships with the local police enhance the support the children and young people get should they go missing, and upon their return to the home. Risk-management is robust and protects the children and young people from exploitation.

Behaviour is managed positively, which teaches the children and young people how their behaviours can affect them and the people around them. There are appropriate boundaries in place, which the children and young people understand and accept. This gives the children and young people a sense of security, and knowing that there are 'house rules' in place reinforces to the children and young people that the staff genuinely care about their safety and well-being.

A social worker said, 'My young person is safe living at the home. Their risk-taking behaviour has significantly reduced, which is major progress. She feels safe and secure at the home, and she feels supported.'

The registered manager and the staff team ensure that the children and young people live in a safe environment. They regularly carry out health and safety and fire safety checks, which keeps the children and young people safe. The staff check and vet all visitors, and ensure that they have signed the visitor's book. This ensures that the registered manager can monitor who has access to the children and young people.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
The registered manager has been in post since the home registered with Ofsted in April 2013. He has used his transferable skills, having previously worked in adult services, to support children and young people to achieve good outcomes. He does not have a relevant level 5 childcare qualification, but he is now working towards completing one, and is planning to have completed his Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare by April 2017. A range of changes have been implemented since the last inspection. They have strengthened the management team to better work together to improve outcomes	

for the children and young people. Regular meetings have improved communication, and roles and responsibilities are established. This organised approach to improving leadership and management contributes to the improved operation of the home.

A senior staff member said, 'Things are much better, we are working together and we are learning a lot more about management. The meetings are good; we get a chance to talk about how things are and what we need to do.'

Better working relationships with placing authorities have enabled the registered manager to improve his skills and knowledge. Visiting other children's homes, and reflecting with peers, has enhanced the registered manager's day-to-day practice. The responsible individual has looked at ways to support the registered manager and staff that will help them to carry out their duties. He has provided an administrator to support the registered manager, and he is actively seeking access to a therapeutic social worker to support the staff and to offer clinical support. These actions show that the provider is willing to invest in his staff and in the overall outcomes for the children and young people.

The registered manager said, 'It has been very helpful talking to other managers, and I am glad I did this. I feel much better about managing the home, and I know I can contact them for advice.'

There has been further progress by meeting the requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection. The statement of purpose has been updated to include the required information. It now sets out what the home intends to do to support the children and young people. This provides parents, social workers and placing authorities with meaningful information to ensure that social workers place children and young people appropriately.

Revised staff duty rotas now include the full names of all the staff, along with their designation. It is now clear which member of staff is responsible for the home in the absence of the manager, and the rotas show planned shifts and the actual hours the staff work. These changes ensure that there are clear records which demonstrate that, in the main, staffing arrangements meet the needs of the children and young people.

There are, however, rare occasions when inappropriate shift-planning impacts negatively on the children and young people – in particular, when new and inexperienced staff have been rostered to work together. Staff who are new to the home do not always understand the needs of the children and young people, and this compromises consistent care.

Actions have been taken to monitor how the registered manager and staff are progressing with completing their residential childcare diploma qualifications. This is to ensure that they have the minimum required qualification to carry out their

roles. Since the last inspection, two staff have completed their level 3 award, which is a positive move forward. They have also registered to start their level 5 award. This additional measure shows the registered provider is investing positively in staff development.

A staff member said, 'I am so excited to be doing my level 5; I love to learn. I am going to the college now so I can get started straight away.'

Reasonable changes to night staffing arrangements means there is better monitoring of the children and young people. The registered manager has undertaken a lone-working risk assessment, specifically relating to one staff member doing a sleep-in duty. Changes to the evening shifts ensure that a second staff member remains in the home until the children and young people settle for the night, and there is now an on-call rota to contact staff for additional support.

Two recommendations to improve the home's workforce plan and to secure private records are met. This ensures that the registered manager can maintain a more robust oversight of the staff, and that the confidentiality of the children and young people is respected.

There are shortfalls in the staffing complement, and the registered manager's shift patterns compromise the management of the home. Currently, the number of staff employed at the home is not sufficient to meet the home's minimum staffing levels, and there is no capacity to cover unplanned absence, holidays or training days. By working additional hours and overtime, currently the goodwill of staff is addressing any shortfalls, but this is not sustainable in the long term. This way of working potentially jeopardises the stability of successful placements for the children and young people.

The registered manager does not have any allocated management time to focus on meeting the quality standards for children's homes. He works as part of the staff team, meaning he is included in the home's minimum staffing levels. It is positive for a registered manager to work alongside the staff team occasionally, and with the children and young people, but in this instance it has had a detrimental effect on the management of 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 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 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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