

SC454484

Registered provider: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority home. It provides care and accommodation for up to five children or young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 September 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 8 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None.

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The young people are making progress in areas of their lives inclusive of education and their safety.
- The young people report feeling able to talk to the staff and can identify how they are helped while living at the home.
- The young people are being helped to have more time with their families and friends, and this is a positive development for some of the young people.
- The staff maintain their consistent approach to the boundaries and guidance given to the young people.
- The young people have a greater understanding about their risks, and their risk-taking behaviours have been reduced.
- The young people are able to complain, and these complaints are responded to effectively.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The staff need to ensure that the details of the young people's records match the standard of their care practices.
- The young people need a means of maintaining contact with the staff when they are out and away from the home.
- With the ever-changing demographic of the population in the home's area, the staff need to develop their knowledge around pertinent safeguarding issues, such as female genital mutilation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
06/12/2016	Full	Good
17/02/2016	Full	Good
19/10/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person must take to meet 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, that the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure – that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(b))	16/10/2017
The care planning standard is that children – In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure – that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14(1)(2)(c))	16/10/2017

Recommendations

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

This is with particular reference to risk assessment and missing protocols. These documents need to contain pertinent information that could assist in the help for and protection of the young people.

- Staff need the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate a child is in any way at risk of harm. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.12)

This is with particular reference to the staff receiving information and training around pertinent safeguarding issue of female genital mutilation.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The young people are making varying levels of progress with their lives, and the staff team helps the young people to recognise their individual successes. The staff provide the young people with continuous encouragement and help them to be able to achieve future outcomes and aspirations. One young person said, 'The staff have helped me in all areas of my life and also helped me to understand my behaviours and history.' while another young said: 'Staff are good. They help me with my problems. They are always there for you if and when you need them.'

The young people benefit from a well-planned admission to the home. The manager takes appropriate steps to gain much information about each young person prior to admission. This is to ensure that their needs can be met and their placement into the home will not impact on the other young people. Post-admission, the staff continue to review the suitability of a young person's needs within the placement, particularly as complexities present themselves. This includes the decision to manage further admissions, to help maintain the stability and security of the home and those who live there.

When the young people move on from the home, the staff ensure that they receive the best and appropriate care and support at their new placements, by sharing all relevant information about each young person's needs and risks. The young people are aware that they can maintain their connections and relationship with those whom are left at the home and, where possible, this is supported and encouraged by the staff team.

The young people have clear plans in respect of their education. These are formed around the young people's wishes and interests. Although the young people's commitment to education varies, the encouragement and promotion by the staff remain at a high level. This staff support has had some fantastic outcomes for some of the young people, as their commitment to education and training goes from strength to strength. One young person has progressed from low attendance at education to enjoying a full timetable at college. However, one young person raised the issue of his frustration at the timeliness of the implementation of his desired plan to source a job, although the staff are trying to progress his.

The young people are helped to maintain their individual health and emotional well-being. They are encouraged by the staff to attend their required health appointments and receive treatment to address any health concerns. In addition, when identified as appropriate, specialist support for young people is provided by mental health services. The staff team also obtains regular advice and guidance from specialist mental health practitioners to develop its practice in the interest of the young people. Although some young people have regularly misused illegal drugs and alcohol, it is evident that, through the guidance and measures implemented by the staff team, there has been a reduction of this misuse. A professional reported: '(Name's) illegal drug use has reduced slightly,

but is still an issue. However, the staff continue to monitor this and raise to us any concerns that could be linked to his drug use.'

The young people are benefiting from increased time with their family and significant others, and this is a positive element of the young people's life and journey through care. One young person was able to talk about her increased phone contact with her sister and nephew, and how it had been 'really good for me'. One parent reported: 'The staff are doing everything to help my son and us as a family. They are really supportive and there is nothing more they could be doing.'

The young people live at a home that provides them with a feeling of comfort and homeliness. The home is well decorated and, although there is some evident damage to elements of the home, the staff work with the young people to rectify this. The staff achieve resolutions with the young people without any intervention from the police when addressing damage caused to the home.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

The young people are making progress in relation to their understanding and management of their own risks. Historically, one young person had not been in a position to keep herself safe from significant harm, yet progress has been identified and is evident. This includes a significant reduction in the risk of child sexual exploitation. The young people's progress has not been as a result of supervision constraints or restrictions on movement. Instead, progress has been achieved through the development of trusting relationships and the education, guidance and care provided to the young people by the staff. The staff pay ongoing attention to each young person's whereabouts, associates and presentation. However, it is apparent that, for one young person, they have no means of contact when away from the home. This could impact on the staff making contact promptly. One professional reported: 'Previously, (Name's) risks were high, but these have been significantly reduced. The staff have managed the risks around social media really well, and (Name) has been open and honest with the staff team.'

Although some of the young people continue to push against the boundaries and routines of the home the staff remain consistent in their approach. This ensures that the young people receive a stable and consistent approach to promote their future progress and engagement. One professional reported: 'I am confident that the staff can manage (Name's) needs. It is a challenge due to the group dynamic, but they acknowledge this. This remains the best placement for (Name). The staff know his strengths and what he finds difficult.'

The young people know how to complain and are helped to express their concerns at the home, and these are listened to and taken seriously. Measures are implemented to ensure that the young people know that their concerns are responded to and that action is taken to resolve their concerns. One young person reported about the concerns that they had about another young person: 'It is all right now, and the staff helped me

through this.'

The young people's safety is maintained by a vigilant staff team. When the young people present with negative behaviours, or information is discovered that raises concerns, the staff are quick to respond. This includes staff working with wider agencies to implement measures to ensure that the young people's safety is maintained and their protection is a priority. However, the young people's records need to reflect the significant concerns and information that the staff have.

The young people have developed a good level of insight into their situations and behaviours, they can focus on their future and are building up resilience. The staff have an active role in this development, as they also make a continuous effort to maintain and update their knowledge and understanding of the needs that are pertinent to young people. For example, the staff have had additional training around child sexual exploitation and the signs, and symptoms of, and the responses to, current drug trends. Yet, with the ever-changing demographic of the population in the home's area, the staff need to develop their knowledge around pertinent safeguarding issues, such as female genital mutilation.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is experienced, well organised and motivational for her team. She is suitably qualified and has been a consistent member of the team for a significant number of years. She, together with her staff team, have high expectations and continue to develop practices at the home to promote the best outcomes for young people. The changes that are made are to encourage the ownership of and participation by young people in the information that is recorded about them and to ensure that their voice is clearly heard.

The team continues to strive for the young people's progress and achievement of their full potential. The staff are not complacent in their approach, and continue to review and develop practice to ensure that the needs of the young people are met and that continued improvements are made possible.

The manager is supported by a staff team which has a wealth of knowledge and experience. In the absence of the manager, the senior team is able to respond to the needs and demands of running the home. All the staff confidently provide a clear oversight of the young people and what, as a team, they are trying to achieve for the young people. One staff member said: 'We provide the best possible care for the young people. We are all child centred.'

As a result of some staff retiring, the manager has recruited more staff to work in the home. This brings added flexibility to the home to meet the needs of the young people and respond to opportunities that may arise for them. In addition, the manager follows a stringent recruitment process to ensure that the young people are appropriately protected. A new staff member reports that they are well supported in their role and that their practice is developed through the mentoring process delivered by the senior team.

There is strong partnership working between the home and partner agencies, including professionals and family members. Staff work together with the wider system to ensure that the young people's needs are met, and this is effective from the joint planning and implementation of plans pertinent to the young people's needs. Professionals report that they receive regular communication from staff and attend meetings that are held about the young people. In particular, one professional said: 'The staff are really good. They update me on almost a daily basis if I need to know anything, and they keep me in the loop.'

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC454484

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Town Hall, Church Street, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S70 2TA

Responsible individual: Jonathan Banwell

Registered manager: Jan Jones

Inspector

Jennifer Fenlon, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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