

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	3 May 2016
Unique reference number	SC457132
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	John Minty
Inspector	Sarah Canto

Inspection date	3 May 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
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	Outstanding
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC457132

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The young person in this home has made significant progress and leads a safe and settled life. They respond to the flexible care and consistent boundaries that staff set, which meet their changing needs.
- Relationships between staff and the young person are strong and trusting, enabling the young person to respond to support and advice offered.
- Staff promote education and independence skills for the young person, and the young person has responded by accessing college and life-skills training.
- The registered manager is a skilled and competent leader. The committed and caring staff team is well supervised and supported, which links directly to the positive care that the young person receives.
- The home is regularly maintained and decorated. It is homely, welcoming and well equipped.
- The manager and staff communicate regularly with other agencies and have good working relationships. Transition plans are complex due to the young person's changing circumstances, but are now starting to take shape. When delay or uncertainty exists, the manager and staff have supported the young person and liaised with professionals, with creative suggestions. However, the manager has not fully challenged delays and lack of clarity in local authority planning.
- Complaints and concerns are responded to and dealt with satisfactorily. Concerns and informal complaints raised by the young person are not recorded centrally, which means that the manager cannot easily review them to identify trends and patterns.

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 persons 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 persons must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
5: Engaging with the wider system standard: The registered manager must (b) seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; (c) if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans.	7 June 2016

Recommendations

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

- 4.13 Regulation 39 sets out the requirements on the registered person to have a complaints procedure. In particular, centrally record concerns raised by young people and how these have been resolved.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide accommodation for a maximum of one young person with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is run by a private provider that also operates other children's homes in the local area.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
1 February 2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
17 November 2015	Full	Good
4 February 2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
8 October 2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The high quality of care provided, and resulting positive relationships between the young person and staff, lead to the young person experiencing a settled and happy home life in this children's home. The young person has solid, trusted and longstanding relationships with staff who are committed and caring. There are rarely staff changes, and agency staff are not used. Staff respond quickly to the young person's changing needs and work flexibly to ensure that the young person is equipped emotionally and practically. The manager and staff speak highly of the young person whom they support and are proud of their achievements. Preparing the young person for transition into adulthood is taken seriously by staff. The young person is supported by staff to learn budgeting, shopping and cooking. Staff also ensure that the young person is provided with advice and training on independence when outside of the home. Staff assist the young person to be prepared for their future and help them to organise all necessary equipment. In addition to practical life skills, the young person responds well to emotional support and is taught problem-solving approaches, particularly when uncertainty about future transition plans exists. Alongside other planned provision, the young person attends college two days a week and is currently enjoying and benefitting from their course. Staff encourage the young person to access education, particularly when the young person is anxious because provision has changed. The young person also enjoys a number of activities with staff, such as fossil hunting, walking on Dartmoor and shopping. The young person has regular contact with family and significant others. Staff support this contact to happen safely.	

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
Staff work hard to help the young person feel safe and secure. The young person responds well to the consistent boundaries set by staff. These boundaries are clearly understood and are reviewed regularly. The manager has a flexible approach and ensures that responses keep up with changing circumstances. Staff support the young person's relationship with significant others by providing transport and observation of interactions. This work contributes to a wider assessment by social care and helps to keep the young person safe. Challenging behaviour is responded to with a positive approach, and sanctions are not used. This positive approach prevents stressful situations from escalating. Serious incidents have not occurred at all since the previous inspection. A member of staff said, 'The young person knows that regardless of what happens, we will always be here.' Correspondingly, the young person said, 'I feel really happy here. It's like a family. I'm included in everything. I don't want to leave.' The manager and staff are clear about risks and the support that the young person needs. Due to the secure relationships formed, significant risk-taking behaviour and absconding has now ceased entirely for over ten months. Staff do not restrain this young person. Staff care for the young person on a one-to-one basis, and on-call advice and support is available during office hours. Any safeguarding issues are dealt with effectively in line with procedures. Staff are clear about what to do in emergencies or if there is an issue of concern.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The experienced registered manager is committed to ensuring that the young person receives high-quality care and experiences. Staff report that they are well supported by their manager and receive regular supervision in accordance with the statement of purpose. Team meetings occur monthly and are well attended; pertinent issues are discussed and recorded. Thus, staff work cohesively and are up to date with all issues that relate to the young person. A previous requirement in relation to ensuring that staff are trained to meet the	

young person's needs is now met. Staff have researched information that they have shared with the young person while educating themselves too. Bespoke training dates are also set to ensure that staff are fully up to date with the latest research and advice.

An independent visitor provides monthly reports with recommendations, contributing effectively to the manager's quality assurance of the home. Due to the young person's changing circumstances, the aims of their placement plan have altered accordingly, to ensure that these needs are met and that progress continues. Thus, the manager analyses the significant progress that the young person has made from their starting point and continually seeks to improve upon this progress.

The young person raised a concern regarding a change in staffing. The registered manager and senior manager listened to the young person and put a plan in place to address the concern. Consequently, the young person feels satisfied with this arrangement. The manager does not hold a central register of concerns that are not viewed as formal complaints. Collation of this information would assist the manager in reviewing the overall effectiveness of the home and the ways in which strengths and weaknesses are addressed.

The manager and home are in regular communication with external agencies that describe staff as 'creative', 'proactive' and 'taking things seriously'. Professionals feel confident that the young person is supported by the staff and has made good relationships. A social worker said, 'The young person sees it (the home) as their home.'

Staff advocate for the young person at meetings and are involved with future planning and transitions. When delay or uncertainty exist about plans for the young person's future, or documentation is not received in a timely manner, the manager has not always escalated such issues with the local authority. The young person has an advocate but is not aware of the degree of support that the advocacy service can give. Without such advocacy, the young person's vulnerability increases, with regards to the forthcoming transition into adulthood away from the home and the staff's support.

The home is well maintained and decorated. It is a homely environment that the young person and staff take care of and to which they enjoy contributing.

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 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 whom 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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