

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	26/08/2015
Unique reference number	SC457183
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Sonia Bennett
Inspector	Pam Nuckley

Inspection date	26/08/2015
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	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC457183

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The young person requested to come back to this home because he had made good relationships with staff. He said, 'They are like family.' A good admission procedure shows that careful consideration was given to assess whether the home could meet his needs.
- The young person has made good progress across all areas of his life. Several professionals said that the nurturing environment at this home supports him to make better choices which have reflected on his good outcomes. The educational achievements for this young person have gone beyond professional expectations. He has taken some exams and has ambitions for his future.
- The young person is in good health. He has been supported to attend health appointments and now understands the value of maintaining good health. Staff have worked closely with the looked after nurse to understand and support him with a hereditary condition. In addition to this, a clinician works closely with the staff team on strategies that help to reduce anxiety. As a result, his emotional health has improved.
- The young person said he was safe and happy at this home. Safeguarding professionals said that identified risks had reduced and good working relationships between the home and them support him to continue to do well.
- The young person has been supported to raise concerns with the local authority and with other professional bodies. Therefore, he has learnt that taking things up within a formal manner produces better results.
- The manager of this home has the welfare of young people at the heart of her practice. She supports staff well to ensure that consistency of care is given. She consults with the young person and with a range of professionals to ensure that the home continues to develop. However, she needs to improve the quality of staff supervision, the evaluation of information about the young person's progress, transition plans and record the actions taken following serious incidents.

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
40: Notification of a serious event A notification made under this regulation must include details of the matter and any actions taken by the registered person. (Regulation 40 (5) (a) (i) (iii))	30/09/2015
14: The care planning standard In order to meet the care planning standard the registered person must ensure - (2) (b) that the arrangements are in place to- (iii) plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority. This is specifically in relation to children having a clear transition plan.	30/09/2015

Recommendations

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

- Ensure systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- Ensure measurements of progress include qualitative information. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 26, paragraph 5.2)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This private children's home accommodates one young person with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
19/08/2014	Full	Good
18/03/2014	Interim	Satisfactory progress
02/10/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Young people are admitted to this home in a planned way. Records show that all information was sourced to make a clear decision that the home could meet the young person's needs. The young person said, 'I requested to come back here because I was happy here.' He confirmed that staff had gone through the welcome booklet with him, so he was very clear about the expectations and boundaries of the home. On the whole, the young person is making good progress across all areas of his life. A safeguarding professional said, 'I visited him last week just to say how proud I was of him and how well he was doing.' This shows that other professionals also recognise the improvements he has made at this home. The young person has been supported to make a complaint about the local authority and another professional's behaviour. He said, 'They told me I was returning to my home town for semi-independence. I was very angry and upset because no-one had asked me. The manager got me an advocate and now I can look at places where I want to live.' He also shared some concerns about a professional's actions. The manager formally raised this through the appropriate systems. This matter is still being investigated. But he said, 'I am happy that it is getting sorted.' A professional said, 'The impact of these good arrangements is that he now knows that people will support him. In the past, he would have reacted negatively but he can now calmly get his point across.' This shows that young people are fully supported and learn to challenge decisions or professionals, in a positive manner. They also have an independent person to talk to if they wish to raise a concern. The young person's history of attending education was very poor. Since being at this home his attendance has improved to 75%. He has also recently sat four exams. He has been able to do this because an excellent package of education was tailored to meet his needs. This included attending school, an alternative provision and being home tutored. He said, 'I loved going to PIP (Power In Partnership) I am doing a plastering course. I am a grafter and want to learn a trade. I am also going to take my exams again because I didn't get good results.' A professional said, 'For this young person to sit his exams was beyond anybody's expectations.' Staff are going to surprise him with a new bike to celebrate these achievements. The bike will also help him in his semi-independence, by being able to get to his work placement on his own.	

The social worker receives a monthly report containing an update on the progress or decline in his behaviour. This ensures that they are regularly updated. But the report contains a pie and bar chart of information that has not been evaluated. Likewise, the education plan contains similar information. Therefore, the information is not being used effectively to measure and understand his progress.

The young person is in good health. He has a hereditary condition that could impact on the type of health care he receives. This is well managed. The looked after nurse has attended a staff meeting to discuss the condition and its implications. Further information has been sourced from the internet and shared with staff. Clear health plans identify the condition, show the action to take in an emergency and how the young person manages this on a daily basis. The company employs clinicians to work closely with young people. They complete an initial assessment, attend staff meetings and meet with young people regularly. A clinician said, 'Out of all the homes I visit. This home instinctively knows how a good nurturing environment impacts on their well-being.' He continued to say, 'When strategies do no longer get the desired outcome, they will invite me to a team meeting and we will look at a way forward.' As a result, the young person's emotional health has significantly improved and he is now making more positive choices.

Young people have good plans for seeing significant people in their lives. Any restrictions identified by the local authority are clearly shown. The staff team have completed contact training and understand their roles and responsibilities in supporting the young people. This means that young people have meaningful and safe contacts with people who are important to them. The young person's friends are warmly invited into this home. He said, 'They come and stay to play on the x-box, have tea, go out for meals with us and come on activities. It's great.' Therefore, they are able to form and sustain relationships within the community.

The home has an independence scheme that covers three stages that assesses their ability. The young person said, 'I have all the skills I need to look after myself. I can cook. I make a fantastic pasta. I can wash my clothes, iron and generally look after myself. Although it's nice when staff do it for you.' He has started a weekly allowance to budget for everything but this has not gone to well. Staff are looking at different ways to support him in this area. As part of his semi-independence the young person has been completing application forms for housing, letters for colleges and completing a curriculum vitae. He is also exploring a course that will assist him in finding employment, such as interview techniques. All this information is held on file but in no logical order. The young person's independence plan has recently changed and staff are exploring different options for him. But there is a lack of a co-ordinated plan within the home to show what steps staff are taking.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
The young person said that he felt extremely safe in this home. He said staff are very clear with him about keeping himself safe and that they discuss the risks that he sometimes puts himself in. A clinician said, 'He has not only made improvements in this area but he is now able to empathise with others. This is because staff share their feelings with him. For example, a member of staff went to pick him up at an agreed time. He wasn't there. She explained to him how vulnerable she felt in a strange area, alone, late of a night. He had not thought about this and apologised.' The young person said that relationships with staff are really good. He said the manager was 'funny and brill'. He said that staff are clear, honest and listened to him well. He said he often needed things explaining again or after he has calmed down but they are very patient and do this. Good risk assessments highlight the level of risk and the strategies and actions to take if an incident occurs. More importantly, the young person is encouraged to comment on how these risks affect him. A member of staff said, 'It is important to know what they see as a risk, how they feel it impacts on their judgements and what actions they would take. This informs the level of work we need to do with them or whether we need additional services to help us.' Staff discuss risk assessments within staff meetings to see if any changes are needed. This ensures that they are regularly reviewed and that everyone is aware of any changes. There have been no concerns raised about young people with the local authority safeguarding officer recently. She said that staff are proactive, communicate well and have robustly reported any incident, in the past, quickly. There has been some improvement around the young person not being reported missing from home. This is due to agreements around staying overnight at friends and extended reporting times. However, he continues to be classed as absent when he does not return to the home on time. These arrangements have been made in consultation with the missing from home co-ordinator and his social worker. The missing from home co-ordinator said, 'I have more involvement with this home than others but I don't deem this to be negative. The young person has a regular pattern of being absent. I speak with staff on a regular basis. Staff are pro-active in their approach and I am confident that they feel able to contact me for advice. The missing from home protocol is adhered to and the staff are supportive of requirements under this protocol in relation to intervention meetings and information sharing. The staff also engage well with the local community police officer's for the area and share information and maintain positive relationships.' The home continues to address this area and incentives have been put in place to ensure he returns on time.	

A long-standing stable staff team cares for the young person. This means that the young person receives continuity of care from staff who know him well. Staff take pride in their strong relationships that have brought about significant improvements in him engaging with them and the improvements in his behavior. One member of staff said, 'We don't tell him what to do. We discuss his choices and give him examples of what the likely outcome could be. This is more productive as he now makes better choices.' This means that negative consequences have reduced and there has been a significant rise in positive consequences. For example, the young person has had meals out with friends, extra money and a bike. He said, 'Negative consequences are fair and sometimes I can make it up in another way.' This means that he is able to make an informed choice, take responsibility for his actions and can see the benefits of making a good choice.

The young person lives in a safe environment because staff ensure that all health and safety issues are addressed. Renewals of certificates for safety equipment and fire evacuations are completed regularly.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The manager was registered with Ofsted in 2008. She suitably qualified and experienced. She also manages two other single bed homes. She ensures that she spends equal periods of time within each home. Three deputy managers also support her across the three homes. The manager is currently working a three month notice of employment. She has secured another position within another company. Ofsted were informed appropriately of the arrangements for the future management of the home. The company quickly held interviews for the position and a suitable candidate was found. He has commenced employment and is working closely with the manager to ensure there is a good handover. The home's Statement of Purpose reflects the service provided by the home. There is a good connection between this, impact risk assessments, the home's development plan and the location risk assessment. This means that they are all live working documents that interact and inform the care given in this home. The manager ensures that young people's reviews, 72 hour placement meetings, strategy meetings or core groups are completed on time as outlined within the	

home's Statement of Purpose. This means that plans are regularly up dated and that everyone is working towards the same plan to meet the young person's needs.

Young people are central to the care that they receive at this home. This is because they are encouraged to discuss and comment on every aspect of their care. This is evident in the detailed records. For example, young people discuss how they wish to be cared for, how they would like staff to deal with situations and can comment on what has gone well for them. The young person said he fully understood his care plan and was confident that he could influence the plan.

Most staff are qualified in caring for young people. One staff member is currently completing a recognised qualification. Staff receive a variety of training that supports them to care for young people well. A staff member spoke about a recent training event. She said, 'We are part of the Integrated Youth Services for our area. This means that we can access additional training. I have recently attended a drug and alcohol awareness course. It was really good because it was more in depth, covered approaches and treatments and how other professionals deal with associated incidents.' This means that staff have a better understanding of the impact of drugs and alcohol within society.

Staff said that supervision is regular but that they do not find it purposeful. They explained that the format is within a set agenda and covers the same topics every month. Therefore, time is often taken up with issues already discussed with staff meetings or handovers. The manager is going to address this within a staff meeting and secure suggestions for improving this process. She said, 'This will be a good opportunity for staff to devise a format that meets their needs. It will be taken forward to the homes development plan.' This is a good example of how the manager uses consultation to improve practice. In contrast to this, staff say that appraisals are completed annually and that this focuses on their development and developmental opportunities. For example, one staff has just secured a team leader position and other staff have had the opportunity of completing their Level 5 in Leadership and Management.

A range of professionals said that the manager of this home very committed to young people and advocates on their behalf. She has confidently challenged the local authority when decisions have been made without including the young person in them or when the conduct of other professionals has been called into question. These challenges ensure that young people receive the best possible care and that their voices are heard.

An independent visitor monitors the home on a monthly basis. Ofsted receives

these reports in timely way. They reflect the findings on the quality of care within the home. The manager uses this report in her monitoring to evaluate the records and care given. She takes over any actions noted into her development plan for the ongoing improvement of the home. The development plan is discussed on a monthly basis within staff meetings. Excellent consultation with young people, parents, professionals and stake holders also inform the development of the home. For example, it was identified that the qualifications and background checks of frequently visitors to the home, such as tutors or clinicians, were unknown. The manager has put into place a matrix that addresses these issues. This means that young people are fully safeguarded.

At the last inspection the home was asked to ensure that robust information is supplied about serious events. However, some notifications continue to lack information and detail of the actions taken by the home. This does not ensure that all parties are fully informed of how the home has dealt with the issues.

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 looked after children 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 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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