

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	05/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC475748
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Lisa Singleton
Inspector	Jackie Line

Inspection date	05/02/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection. This home was judged Good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has improved effectiveness. At the last inspection two requirements and two recommendations were raised to improve practice, and all have been effectively addressed. This demonstrates that the registered manager and staff team learn from inspection and drive improvements forward. In turn this has a positive impact on young people's progress and experiences. Action has been taken in response to comments made by young people that staff sometimes shout when they are supporting them through periods of crisis. One young person told the inspector: 'Staff no longer shout, that doesn't really happen anymore, I think they are more aware of how it makes us feel'. Consequently, young people are more reassured, their views are accounted for, and they feel listened to'. A review of training has been completed, and the manager has reiterated to staff the importance of completing this in a timely way. All staff have now received training in e-safety, and work is undertaken more readily with young people about staying safe online and the responsible use of social media. This has been particularly beneficial for two young people who previously experienced difficulties in this area. They are now successfully managing to have internet enabled phones without incident, and staff continue to support them to ensure they and others are appropriately safeguarded. Training on sexually harmful behaviours remains on the agenda but has not yet been delivered. The registered manager is liaising with senior managers to arrange for this to be facilitated. Internal monitoring systems are robust which means issues are highlighted and addressed. The manager has responded to shortfalls in some elements of recording, and as a result young people's risk assessments now contain accurate and up to date information. The location risk assessment has also been reviewed to include environmental factors within the locality of the home. This means that frameworks for managing risk are clear, supporting the good practice already delivered by staff.	

Steps have been taken to devise a new fire evacuation plan highlighting all emergency exits within the home. Fire safety pertaining to the top floor of the accommodation is now clear, and a visit from the fire service confirms satisfactory arrangements are in place. This demonstrates that health and safety concerns are suitably addressed, helping to create a safe environment for young people and staff.

Young people who have lived in the home for several years are maintaining good levels of progress. They are coping with adolescence relatively well, with minimal instances of drug and alcohol misuse, only isolated missing episodes, and no anti-social behaviour. Furthermore, they are developing and maintaining largely positive peer influences, thereby learning from past mistakes. Young people have age appropriate freedoms, and respond well to boundaries in place. They seek support and advice from adults they trust at times of need, and this reflects the quality of relationships between staff and young people that have developed over time.

Younger and newer residents continue to flourish in response to good routines and clear expectations. Behaviours are improving, and they are learning to self-regulate and make better choices. A grandparent comments: 'I am really happy with how well X has come on since he has been in the home, staff are doing a great job'.

Incidents of physical intervention are reducing, and in particular the use of ground restraints. This demonstrates that practice is kept under review, and de-escalation strategies are increasingly effective in managing young people's sometimes challenging behaviour.

Staff work effectively alongside young people to improve their physical and emotional well-being. All are engaged in activities aimed at increasing physical fitness, self-confidence, and social skills. Young people generally engage well with an in-house therapy team who are flexible and responsive to their needs. For example, one young person is having additional input to help him to cope with issues pertaining to contact. As a result, young people are well supported to address past and present issues as well as realistically planning for their future.

Educationally most young people are doing well, and they are on track with their learning and plans. Attendance remains high and levels of participation are good. When issues do arise staff work effectively with schools and colleges to address these. One young person continues not to be engaged in education, training, or employment despite the continuing efforts and encouragement of staff.

A key focus remains on promoting independence and preparing young people to move on from the home on completion of their compulsory or further education. Staff are proactive in this work liaising regularly with young people and placing authorities to review plans, and think about the way forward. An innovative and informative display in the home is helping young people to think about budgeting, and living costs for when they move on. This facilitates discussions about priorities,

and enables young people to think realistically about what the future may hold. One social worker says: 'I can't fault the home at all, they have been brilliant. The staff have a really good approach with regards to helping X with his independent living skills.'

Safeguarding practice is particularly robust. Incidents that do occur are promptly responded to. Information is clearly recorded and shared readily with partner agencies. Consequently, all matters are investigated and suitably reviewed and this promotes the safety and well-being of young people. Placing authorities continue to have high levels of confidence in the service. One social worker said: '[The home delivers] a consistently high standard of care and support for the young people. Excellent staff. Good communication'.

Recruitment practice is strong ensuring that only those who are suitable to work with young people are allowed to do so. New staff benefit from a well-planned and comprehensive induction process enabling them to settle in well and develop their skills alongside more experienced colleagues. Staff confirm they are well supported, and have confidence in the management team. Regular team meetings coupled with supervision allows staff to focus on how best to meet the needs of young people, as well as reflect on their own practice and areas for development.

No requirements or recommendations are raised following this inspection.

Information about this children's home

This is a re-registration of an existing children's home, due to a change of company name, all other matters remain the same (previous URN SC390201). This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for seven children with learning difficulties as well as children who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by a private provider.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/10/2015	CH - Full	Good
10/03/2015	CH - Interim	sustained effectiveness
11/12/2014	CH - Full	Good

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection 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

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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