

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	06/10/2015
Unique reference number	SC449155
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	The Amicus Community Arundel Limited
Registered person address	The Amicus Community, PO Box 79, Arundel, West Sussex, BN18 9XA

Responsible individual	Rebecca Newton
Registered manager	Stewart Thomson
Inspector	Keith Riley

Inspection date	06/10/2015
Previous inspection judgement	improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceeds the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC449155

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- The core theoretical model of a psychodynamic approach within a therapeutic community has a significant positive impact on the emotional and intellectual development of young people. They are no longer just surviving but living.
- Safeguarding is at the forefront of practice. Highly effective planning means young people are kept as safe as possible as they build confidence to engage with others in society. Young people say they feel safe and secure. Behaviour is exceptionally good. There is no need for the use of any physical intervention.
- Young people are at the centre of practice. Staff hear their voice. They are skilled at understanding the psychological reasons for words and behaviour. They are empathetic to the underlying pain and are able to respond effectively. Young people are able to come to terms with their life story.
- Young people form excellent attachments with staff over a number of years. Link workers stay with their key young person when they make the transition into this home.
- Leadership and management across the organisation is exceptional. There are high expectations of themselves and of the staff, leading by example to sustain the highest possible quality of care.
- The management team knows the strengths and weaknesses. They welcome robust monitoring. They carefully select independent visitors who have the experience, skill and knowledge to provide professional challenge. There is a culture of continuous improvement.
- Other agencies speak very positively of the professionalism, communication and therapeutic expertise of the staff. There is excellent inter-agency working. This includes close and collaborative working with education professionals. Staff ensure young people are in a place emotionally where they are able to learn.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered for four young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Young people are admitted from the other children's home nearby, operated by the same private organisation. The home is recognised by a national organisation as a provider of therapeutic care. Young people living at the home attend the organisation's own school.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/02/2015	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
25/11/2014	CH - Full	Outstanding
20/01/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress
05/07/2013	CH - Full	Outstanding
19/02/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>outstanding</p>
<p>Staff meet the emotional and developmental needs of traumatised young people. The totality of their experience in the home, school and community is carefully considered. Consequently, young people find healing through the therapeutic relationships and the 'normalisation' of life. A placing social worker said, 'I continue to be very happy with the work done. They are brilliant at working with young people who have been traumatised.' A statutory report stated, '(Name) is clearly supported to manage his emotional difficulties on a daily basis and provided with consistent boundaries and advice.' A young person is now able to use language to express himself rather than behaviour. Another young person has a fully furnished bedroom from a starting point of unable to tolerate the smallest item in his environment.</p> <p>Young people are thriving in this home. They grow in their self-esteem, confidence and maturity. Young people, who have been terrified of relationships, are able to participate in courses with others. An example is a residential young leaders' course culminating in a young person giving a presentation to a large number of his peers.</p> <p>Young people, who now feel cared for, are able to care for others. They help younger children with their education, they give advice to peers who are experiencing difficulty and they volunteer to help members of the public, for example to look for a lost coin.</p> <p>Staff listen to young people. They understand their words and behaviour. As well as the daily contact with staff, young peoples' written view is welcome. Staff take them seriously and respond to their requests.</p> <p>Staff have the needs of young people at the centre of practice. They ensured there were events over the summer holidays at their new school that minimised their anxieties about starting there. Staff were able to source a musical course of a young person's choosing with a definite end date, to curtail his worries about group work. They encourage and support young people to write a report for his statutory reviews, as well as attending in person.</p> <p>Staff view education as very important to improving life chances of the young people. There is a unified approach between education and care staff to ensure young people attend school. They have daily meetings to discuss their current emotional well-being and ensure young people are ready to learn. There are</p>	

excellent outcomes, such as a young person being able to sustain a college placement. A report stated, '(Name) worked hard to produce some excellent portfolio work, his confidence levels have improved.'

Young people work toward their independence. Senior staff have received specific training on preparation for adulthood and pathway planning. Staff keep protocols under review so young people still feel cared for as they take personal responsibility for keeping themselves safe in society. They are able to travel independently and visit friends in other towns, from a starting point of being unable to leave the home without staff.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
<p>There is a proven track record in managing child protection concerns, including allegations against staff. The procedure is robust, thorough and followed diligently by staff. Staff ensure all are protected in consultation with others. A local-authority safeguarding professional said, 'They are very efficient and 'on the ball'. They refer in a timely way and are guided by advice.' Records give an extremely detailed and chronological account of events and action taken. The management team fully support staff, who are subject to an allegation, throughout the process.</p> <p>All staff ensure there is a detailed and comprehensive approach to any significant incidents. They keep young people as safe as possible during an incident. A debrief and evaluation takes place to consider how to prevent recurrence. There is critical reflection on practice and review of risk assessments. Staff give deep thought to the underlying psychological reasons for behaviour. Strategies are successful. Repeat incidents are unknown.</p> <p>Staff give the emotional well-being of young people high priority. Staff help them uncover and explore their difficult emotions. They understand their emotional disturbance and help them find alternate ways to express their pain. Young people are able to use words rather than violent behaviour. They access formal therapy for the first time, such as psychoanalytical psychotherapy. Young people who have needed restraining for their own safety demonstrate a significant improvement in managing their emotions and subsequent behaviour. There has been no need for any physical intervention since the last inspection.</p> <p>There are excellent link working sessions with young people. It is particularly impressive that relationships formed are maintained over many years. Young people are able to form secure attachments. They have a secure base for their lives. They move from a subconscious preoccupation for survival to a place of</p>	

emotional growth, living and happiness.

Young people are in excellent health. Staff ensure there are regular checks, such as with the looked after child nurse. All immunisations are up to date. Young people fully engage with routine appointments such as the dentist and optician. There is innovative practice, for example working with the school so young people, who find their oral hygiene difficult in the home, are able to clean their teeth at school. Staff take medical advice, for example, when a young person refuses to take anti-biotics. They work with health professionals to reinforce the importance of taking prescribed medication. Young people are convinced to look after their health. This includes regular exercise, such as swimming or going to the gym.

Staff keep young people as safe as possible in the cyber world. They identify and manage any possibility of risk and harm. They are not risk averse. There is excellent practice such as assessing any films or games as to suitability and benefit, even if the young person viewing the movie is above the censored age.

There is robust recruitment practice. The management team only employ adults deemed to be suitable to work with traumatised children. In addition to safer recruitment practice, they conduct an informal interview to assess a candidate's attitude and suitability for working therapeutically with traumatised children. Applicants and current staff complete a disclosure form that confirms they are not disqualified by association to work with vulnerable children. Former employers complete medical questionnaires. Young people are engaged in the selection process. They give their view on potential staff who are required to work in the home as part of the selection process.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
<p>The leadership team are experts in what they do. They are confident and ambitious. They are robust in their decision-making. They have high aspirations for all the young people. They stimulate ideas and progress from the staff team, for example using an ideas and suggestion log. They have a clear, structured development plan in place, focused on the needs of the young people, with clear timescales. There is a culture where all staff are united in their efforts to improve the lives of the young people in their care, challenging other professionals' decisions when necessary</p> <p>The attitude of the senior leadership team toward monitoring is noteworthy. They are ambitious for continual improvement. They welcome constructive criticism. They go to great lengths to ensure this happens consistently. An independent</p>	

visitor provides a thorough and challenging monthly report. They take this very seriously, putting in a comprehensive action plan because of any recommendations. They invite other visitors to make comment, such as other young people who have been in care themselves. A visitor said, 'Staff and young people work together well to create a calm, relaxed atmosphere in the home. Young people value the staff and feel they always make time for them.'

The Registered Manager has considerable experience in therapeutic care. He holds the necessary therapeutic qualifications and ensures the home remains a leader in its field, for example by retaining accreditation with the Royal College of Psychiatry. He receives excellent support and supervision, including 'full professional analysis' and clinical supervision.

The aims and objective in the Statement of Purpose are met. Admissions are made from the organisation's other home that accommodates younger children. There is excellent placement stability. Young people who have experienced multiple foster placement breakdowns are able to find a safe and secure base. They are able to form attachments with adults and trust them, often for the first time.

The staff team are professional, motivated, well trained and supported. They speak highly of the Registered Manager and the organisation as a whole. Morale is high: 'office politics' do not exist. All work together to meet the complex needs of the young people who have experienced significant trauma. They deliver therapeutic care on a daily basis. Young people are able to reach a place emotionally where they are able to engage with regular formal therapy, such as psychoanalytical psychotherapy, for the first time in their lives. A placing social worker said, 'I have nothing but praise. (Name) has come a long way.' Staff clearly know him very well and he has good relationships.'

The leadership team have made changes to the shift pattern to make it more flexible to suit the needs of the young people. Young people are easily able to have the staff member of their choice to support them, for example at statutory reviews. A professional made the most positive comments about the staff being in the right place at the right time for the right young person.

Record keeping is an exemplar. Staff record detailed and pertinent accounts of each young person's life. These inform professional reports, which are of an excellent standard, to other agencies. Staff make recommendations and views based on robust written evidence. The leadership team challenge other professionals' decision-making, for example, when the level of emotional disturbance is not being fully recognised in pathway planning.

Staff communicate very well with others. A placing social worker said, 'They stay in touch. They are easy to get hold of and keep me informed.' Contributions from all professionals working with the young person engaged by the home inform formal reports. They give a comprehensive account of the young person's needs.

An exceptional management team have created an ethos and culture that works. Young people's life chances are maximised as a competent staff team continually seek to listen and respond to their needs daily in a therapeutic environment.

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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