

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	06/12/2016
Unique reference number	1155757
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Stephanie Scott
Inspector	Nick Murphy

Inspection date	06/12/2016
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	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

1155757

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Staff have an excellent knowledge of young people's needs, enabling them to draw up highly individualised programmes of care. As a result, young people make good progress in most areas of their lives.
- Young people like living here. They get on very well with staff, whom they respect and, for the most part, listen to. They enjoy a range of activities, which improve their confidence and self-esteem. Staff support young people to keep in touch with family and friends.
- Staff work extremely effectively with other agencies, sharing information on a regular basis. This ensures that the intervention of other services is consistent with the care plan and focused on achieving agreed outcomes.
- Staff are good at keeping young people safe, even those who present particular challenges by repeatedly placing themselves at risk. Staff are especially proactive in managing missing-from-home episodes and the threat of child sexual exploitation.
- In general, young people behave well. Boundaries within the home are clear and consistent. Bullying is rare, and physical restraint has never needed to be used.
- Leadership and management are focused on delivering a high quality of care. The provider gives effective support to the registered manager in ensuring that the welfare of young people is prioritised. Formal supervision and training is of high quality, providing effective support to staff. One statutory requirement and one recommendation have been made.

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 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>6. In order to meet the quality of care standard, with particular reference to encouraging young people to follow consistent routines and undertake planned programmes of work, the registered person must ensure that staff:</p> <p>(2)(b)(vi) help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult.</p>	<p>14/01/2017</p>

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the home provides a domestic and homely environment. Specifically, that young people are not required to sign documents such as behaviour management plans and key worker sessions. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides accommodation for up to three children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/04/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10/11/2015	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>Good</p>
<p>Young people have excellent relationships with staff. They enjoy their company, sharing their news and doing activities such as cake baking and craft work. One young person was looking forward to a session making salt dough ornaments with staff (he planned to make a key so that Santa Claus would be able to get into the building on Christmas Eve). One young person said, 'I like it here, it's because of the staff, I get on really well with them.'</p> <p>Staff provide highly individualised support to each young person. They know the needs of the young people very well, and draw up bespoke plans which set out desired goals and outcomes. Staff monitor each young person's progress on a regular basis, enabling them to review the plan and make adjustments if necessary. This ensures that the plan responds to any changes in the young person's circumstances and so keeps it relevant.</p> <p>The premises are immaculately maintained. There is no damage whatsoever, reflecting the investment made by young people in the building. All bedrooms are ensuite, providing privacy and enhancing young people's safety. Staff provide young people with support to personalise their rooms. One young person has a goldfish tank which he maintains with the aid of staff. A recent addition to the home is the summer house in the garden. This is a superb resource, providing additional space for young people to spend time with friends.</p> <p>In general, young people make good progress. Some have excellent attendance at school or training, while others are more difficult to motivate. For young people who are refusing to attend school, staff engage with other services to provide alternatives, such as home tuition. In these situations, staff are always ambitious for further improvement, working with the virtual school head and other professionals to plan a route back to full time education.</p> <p>Staff support young people to maintain good health. They liaise with other services, such as the drug and alcohol team, which provide not only advice and guidance to staff but also work directly with young people. Staff are persistent in encouraging young people to stop smoking, using smoking cessation packs to engage and educate young people about the dangers of this activity. Staff also promote healthy lifestyles. One young person travels to school on his scooter. Menus are varied and nutritious. Activities include horse-riding and other physical pursuits, such as a week's activity holiday in the summer.</p> <p>Staff are also mindful of promoting the emotional health of young people. Working</p>	

with other professionals, such as child and adolescent mental health services, they agree strategies for addressing young people's anxieties and improving their emotional resilience. Staff are also developing an overarching theoretical model of good parenting. This is yet to be fully embedded in daily practice, but it illustrates the desire of the staff to enhance the well-being of young people in all its aspects.

Staff consult young people at every opportunity. They seek their views in group meetings and individual sessions with their key workers. Suggestions from the young people are discussed by staff and the decisions posted up on the young people's notice board. A young person said: 'I'm able to say what I think and change things if I want. I asked the staff for a new phone and they got me one.' Complaints are few, but when they are made, the registered manager investigates fully and feeds back to the young person. Records show that young people are completely satisfied with the process. In a wider context, young people are involved with the local authority's children in care council. They have also taken part in interviews for social workers, and staff in the home. This demonstrates the commitment of the home and the provider in genuinely valuing and respecting the views of young people. It also develops young people's self-esteem and confidence.

Prospective admissions to the home are well managed. Staff evaluate information about the young person so as to ensure that the home can meet their needs and that any impact on the existing group is manageable. The registered manager and the provider demonstrate commitment to the long-term plans for young people. For example, when a young person recently moved to a time-limited, specialist placement elsewhere, their bed was kept open for them to return to. This reassures young people and enhances their sense of identity.

Staff are good at easing the transition for young people who are moving on. For one young person who was returning to live with their family, a member of staff spent a weekend decorating their bedroom in their mother's house. Staff also place more responsibility on older young people for their daily living arrangements, such as using public transport instead of relying on the house car. However, this work is not always consistent, or started early enough. For example, staff do not always provide young people with sufficient motivation to adopt a reasonable daily routine. The formal programme to assess one young person's ability to live independently, and address any gaps in skills, started later than it should have done. This means that young people may leave the home insufficiently prepared for adulthood.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Staff's in-depth knowledge of young people, their backgrounds and current circumstances, enables them to draw up detailed individual risk assessments. These are updated at regular intervals, or following any concern, with any changes being communicated promptly to all staff. This ensures that staff are able to work consistently in keeping young people safe.</p> <p>Some young people pose considerable risks to themselves, for example through sexual exploitation. Staff manage these risks decisively yet sensitively. They work with other agencies, including the police, to agree detailed strategies in their daily management of the young person. Importantly, they involve the young person in these plans, seeking their cooperation wherever possible. For example, if a young person is at risk from using social media, or contacting people they shouldn't, staff will ask them to hand over their phone rather than forcibly removing it. This approach not only reduces the young person's need to run away, but also gives them some responsibility for ensuring their own safety. One young person said, 'I know why staff want me to give them my phone, it's to keep me safe.'</p> <p>Staff are good at preventing incidents when young people might go missing. When young people are out visiting friends or family, staff ask them to keep in contact by phone at intervals. Staff are particularly proactive when young people decide to leave the home without the knowledge or permission of staff. For young people at particular risk, staff will follow them, and stay with them, to ensure that they are not able to meet people who may do them harm. This determination of staff deters those young people who are subject to the undesirable influences of people, usually adults, outside the home. In addition, staff share information with police and other agencies, so that action can be taken against people of concern, and vulnerable young people are protected. When young people return from running away, they are interviewed by an independent person in every case. Information from these interviews is shared with the staff team and other agencies, enabling robust action to be taken.</p> <p>Staff have established clear expectations of young people's behaviour. This, coupled with the quality of the relationships within the home, results in an atmosphere which is almost always settled. Additionally, staff use behaviour management plans which take account of what might trigger a young person's distress or anger, and what strategies are effective in calming them. Incentives are given to encourage young people to aim for agreed targets, as well as simple praise for any small act of kindness performed by a young person. This proactive and positive approach means that sanctions are used sparingly, and that physical restraint has never been necessary in order to keep young people safe.</p>	

The priority given by the staff to safeguarding young people is clearly evident to users of the service, not least the young people. All young people told the inspector that they felt safe here. And a social worker commented, 'The home is doing everything they can to protect the young person, they go above and beyond to keep them safe.'

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>The registered manager is experienced and is working towards the appropriate qualification which she is due to complete in the next few months. She is adept at working with other services and assertive in challenging other professionals if their contribution to a young person's outcomes is insufficient. The senior team has recently been strengthened by the creation of an assistant manager post. This provides staff with more consistent leadership.</p> <p>The staff team is stable and highly experienced. All except the latest recruit are qualified. Staff have access to a range of high-quality training, which is logged on a new, computerised record. This enables the registered manager to have an overview of the skills and knowledge within the group, and identify any deficits, or where a particular member of staff is overdue a refresher. Senior staff provide less experienced staff with formal, regular supervision. This is of excellent quality, focused on the needs of young people and challenging the staff to reflect on their practice and how it makes a difference.</p> <p>Monthly monitoring of the home by the independent person is thorough, enabling the registered manager to be aware of any shortfalls in the quality of care. The registered manager's own monitoring is excellent, her six-monthly reports making good use of consultation with young people to make accurate assessments of their progress. This helps staff, as well as Ofsted, to have confidence in the performance of the home.</p> <p>The overall organisation of the home is very efficient. A social work professional said: 'Staff work fantastically well with me, they make my job so much easier, they are very organised, communications are brilliant, and I am kept up to date within minutes of an incident happening.' Records are kept securely but are easily accessible by young people with the support of staff. However, staff expect young people to sign a number of documents, such as key working sessions and behaviour management plans. This is unnecessary and institutional, and detracts from the otherwise very homely ethos that the home projects.</p>	

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 that 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'.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted.' which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017