

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC031490
Inspector	Kevin Whatley
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Secure Unit

Registered person	East Sussex County Council
Registered person address	County Hall St. Annes Crescent LEWES East Sussex BN7 1UE
Responsible individual	Elizabeth Rugg
Registered manager	Nigel Richard Hewitt
Date of last inspection	11/02/2014

Inspection date	24/06/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **sustained effectiveness**.

The home has sustained effectiveness since the last inspection of February 2014; no requirements or recommendations were made on that occasion. Two recommendations are made as a result of this inspection; these relate to inconsistency in recording and not always providing written responses to young people when required. None of the shortfalls posed a risk of harm to young people.

Since the last inspection the acting manager has been successful in his application to Ofsted to be registered as manager for the home. The Registered Manager is suitably experienced, notably in working with young people within the secure residential environment.

Positive feedback regarding the home and the standards of care being provided were received from parents/carers, social workers and young people themselves. Comments from young people included, 'staff are good...they care about me'. Placing social workers note that, 'Staff help young people to understand how to protect themselves...Staff work in partnership with me', while parents/carers stated, 'The standard of care was brilliant...this placement gave back to us our daughter and to my daughter her life'.

Young people continue to be appropriately safeguarded. Strong links remain in place between the home and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board which ensures issues are considered and addressed swiftly and in line with agreed protocols. Such close liaison enables partner agencies to work together for the benefit of keeping young people safe; no child protection concerns have arisen since the last inspection.

When young people arrive with histories of being vulnerable to harm, including involvement in child sexual exploitation, the home ensure programmes of

intervention are put in place. For example, providing young people with focused intervention work through joint working with external groups who specialise in assisting young people to reduce the risks of being exploited. This enables young people to engage in individual and group sessions, depending on their needs and wishes, and consider the personal and wider implications of their experiences. Similarly staff receive up-to-date training from the same organisation which further supports meeting the complex needs of the current cohort of young people, in particular the emotional and behavioural impact this has on them.

The use of restraint is appropriate and only used when necessary. Staff are suitably trained with a large proportion of physical interventions being imposed to keep young people safe from harming themselves. All restraints, in communal areas, are reviewed using CCTV footage as a means to monitor the justification for doing so and their effectiveness. Records generally present an accurate account of each incident although several entries had been written under the wrong headings which were potentially misleading.

Young people say they are aware of how to make a complaint and that there are staff around who they can talk to. Interactions between staff and young people were open, thoughtful and caring which indicates strong and meaningful relationships exist. A young person's advocate visits the home regularly with such an approach offering young people an alternative route to express their views and opinions to someone who is independent to the home or statutory children's services. Only a few formal complaints have been made by young people; those that have are generally addressed well. The Registered Manager verbally informs young people of the outcome. However a written response confirming any decisions is not consistently provided to them and therefore is not in line with the home's own procedures.

Young people are provided with good support and guidance to prepare for life away from the home. The resettlement needs of young people are identified at the point of admission with suitable plans in place to assist them through periods of transition. Mobility is well used to allow them opportunities to re-integrate back into community life through excursions to shops, libraries and places of interest. Such programmes are linked to the needs of the young person, are carefully risk assessed and increase as the time for moving on approaches.

The home has experienced a number of challenges in recent months. These include issues affecting the robustness of the environment and managing the violent and self-harmful behaviours of some young people. Several incidents occurred which included the involvement of police to assist staff where levels of violence and risk had been deemed extremely high. The management team acknowledge that any decision to request support from the police is never taken lightly, with the safety and wellbeing of young people the paramount concern. Incidents whereby parts of the environment have not always held up to the rigours of physical aggression metered out by young people are being addressed through on-going consultation with the

Department for Education's consultant architect for the young person's secure estate. No significant concerns with the building were identified during this visit. Opportunities are used to de-brief with young people and staff alike to allow for reflection and learning; for instance staff receiving additional physical intervention training which takes greater account of the layout and design of the building. All episodes are suitably reviewed and scrutinised by the managers within an ethos of learning lessons and improving practice.

Information about this children's home

This secure children's home is managed by a local authority. It is approved by the Department for Education to restrict young people's liberty. As well as the living accommodation, there are facilities for administration and education provided on the site.

The children's home can accommodate up to seven young people, who are aged between 10 and 17 years. Admission of any young person over the age of 10 but under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

This inspection has the purpose of informing the Secretary of State on the continuing suitability for this provision to operate as a secure unit to restrict children's liberty.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/02/2014	Interim	good progress
09/09/2013	Full	good
26/09/2012	Full	good
22/05/2012	Full	good

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

Recommendations

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

- ensure there is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action when needed; in particular that key records such as restraint logs are consistently and accurately recorded (NMS 22.1)
- ensure young people understand how their views have been taken into account and where significant wishes or concerns are not acted upon, they are helped understand why; in particular that young people are consistently provided with written responses from any formal complaints they make (NMS 1.2)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections 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

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.