

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC011185
Inspector	Maire Atherton
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Calcot Services for Children Limited
Registered person address	200 Brook Drive Green Park READING RG2 6UB

Responsible individual	Sukhbir Singh
Registered manager	Mary Helen Anne Smith
Date of last inspection	06/02/2014

Inspection date	01/07/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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The effectively led committed staff team provide highly individualised care which promotes positive outcomes for young people with complex needs. The ability of staff to engage with the young people and establish and maintain warm relationships through some very testing times is a real strength of the home. Young people feel safe in the home and know that staff care for them, even when they are challenging staff with difficult behaviour. Staff are consistently concerned with the welfare of the young people and have successfully created a welcoming and nurturing environment.

The young people's engagement in therapy has had a positive impact on their lives. It has also made a difference to contact, with relationships slowly being rebuilt.

The robust monitoring and evaluation of the service by the management is used to further improve the quality of care provided. The management have developed very effective relationships with a wide range of partner agencies. They unanimously describe communication as valuable and of a good standard. This ensures that staff work closely with the placing authorities and other external agencies to provide young people with personalised care that meets their individual needs.

Two shortfalls, that are not seen to have an immediate impact on the young people,

have been identified. One requirement has been made to ensure good recruitment practice is consistently applied in exploring all gaps in employment. One recommendation has been made in respect of a risk assessment of first floor windows, to determine whether they are an approved fire escape or should be restricted appropriately.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is registered for up to seven young people. This service is accredited as a registered therapeutic community. The home is owned and managed by a private organisation. This is a small therapeutic foundation which caters for young people who may have a range of emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/02/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
14/06/2013	Full	outstanding
14/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
24/07/2012	Full	outstanding

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
26 (2001)	ensure that the full range of recruitment checks are undertaken in accordance with the regulations, in particular that there is a satisfactory written explanation of any gaps in employment (Reg 26 (3) (d))	31/08/2014

Recommendations

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

- complete a risk assessment on first floor windows to evidence that either each window is an approved fire exit or that it should be restricted (NMS 10.2)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make significant progress in their time in the home. Social workers cite the development of peer relationships and engagement in social activities as examples of the progress made. This has supported the development of a positive self view which has enabled young people to engage in individual therapy. A social worker outlined how a young person's engagement in therapeutic work has reduced anger outbursts considerably. Another young person is beginning to reflect on how his behaviour impacts on others, a significant personal achievement. Another social worker described therapeutic input as 'really making a difference, the ability to focus, comprehension and consequential thinking have improved'. Another professional observed that the young person 'has made progress, he is in a different place from where he started'.

Young people know what a healthy life style looks like. Staff give them the information and support they need to make the right decisions in a range of areas, such as the food they eat and in choices they make such as smoking and promoting sexual health. This is a continuous learning and development process.

Most young people engage positively and achieve in education and employment from varying starting points with active support from a responsive staff team. They also support and enable young people to successfully apply for further education placements, with a very good awareness of their potential, aspirations and interests.

Young people are involved in the wider community through participation in a range of leisure pursuits that reflect their individual interests and enable them to develop friendships. This has also supported improvements re-building relationships with family and friends, in conjunction with work undertaken in therapy.

Young people learn age appropriate independence skills through daily living activities, such as household chores, shopping and cooking. Each young person has a self-development file containing their individual plans. They record the progress they are making and their achievements and use photos as evidence of this. Young people experience planned endings which provides them with the resources to move on positively.

Quality of care **good**

The staff have established and maintained positive relationships with the young people through some difficult times. Staff have also worked to encourage young people to bring out the best in each other, rather than engaging in inappropriate and

challenging behaviour. This is sometimes successful and young people talk proudly about their positive interventions. A social worker described staff as 'flexible and supportive while putting in firm boundaries'.

Staff are very skilled at gaining the views and opinions of young people and these are used to inform what happens in the home. Staff are responsive to young people's expression of minor irritations and concerns and take action where possible. Staff give consistent messages to young people about why not everything happens as they would wish. Sometimes young people hear and accept this, at other times they respond with challenging behaviour, later acknowledging that they have been unreasonable. Young people know how to complain and the formal process has been used twice in the past 12 months, with appropriate action taken.

The care plans are of a very good standard. Young people's views, including a written contribution, are integral to the plan and the regular reviews. Therapeutic provision is available, tailored to individual need and young people access this at their own pace. Some young people say it is more useful than others do, but it is giving them an insight into behaviour and providing the potential for change.

Staff are both persistent and consistent in the provision of health support and advice. As a result young people routinely access both universal and specialist health care services when necessary. Staff are also highly effective at promoting and supporting education. They have established excellent communication with schools and enabled young people to achieve to the best of their ability. One social worker described a young person's attendance as 'fantastic'. For those young people moving in to live semi-independently previous achievements have not been maintained as they struggle with transition and moving on. Staff are successfully working to re-engage and motivate young people where required.

Staff promote the engagement of young people in a range of activities. A social worker said 'They are very supportive in trying new things'. Individuals enjoy drumming, rock climbing, street dance, trampolining and football for example. At the time of this visit group trips to play pool was a favourite activity.

Staff are very knowledgeable about each young person, through their care plans and as a result of direct work and interaction. Knowledge is also gained by sharing information with the external partner agencies also working with young people. One describe the staff as 'A pleasure to work with, proactive, and they ensure partner agencies are fully involved.' Staff reflect this in their day-to-day practice, which ensures that personal identity needs are well met.

The home is in an established residential area, with easy access to local community facilities. The house is very well maintained and provides young people with a warm, comfortable homely environment. The challenges of dealing with domestic emergencies have been met, with staff and young people adapting to the inconvenience of ongoing work to repair water damage.

Keeping children and young people safe **good**

Young people say they feel safe in the home. They do not report any bullying. Staff are knowledgeable about and alert to a range of safeguarding issues. They work with young people to help them understand how their actions may put them at risk, using external agencies appropriately. Staff do not shy away from tackling difficult issues, for example using a television programme to prompt a discussion on the impact of domestic violence. There is some reluctance by young people to refrain from these behaviours but they do have an understanding of the risks and also the potential consequences. A social worker observed 'Staff encourage the young people to keep themselves safe'.

There are some instances of young people being reported missing. Young people, their families and external agencies say that the home manages each situation well with robust information sharing to good effect. The organisation has employed an independent person to conduct return interviews, as not all placing authorities responded within 72 hours as required.

Through insight provided by the therapists staff have an excellent understanding of why each young person may behave as they do. Staff work hard with young people to enable them to gain an insight into their behaviour and to support them in making changes. Behaviour management in the home has been reviewed and a new incentive scheme introduced very recently. This is yet to be embedded and is being adjusted in the light of comments from young people and observations from staff. The use of sanctions has also been reviewed in the light of comments from the independent visitor. There is an increasing emphasis on restorative justice and making good, with a decrease in the use of financial reparation. There is limited use of physical intervention by staff. Any such incidents are recorded and monitored. Effective management monitoring of all behaviour management strategies ensures that positive handling plans for young people are updated regularly. Thus providing staff with the tools to work consistently in identifying potential triggers and employ distraction and diversion techniques.

Staff are trained in and know how to respond to safeguarding concerns. Any allegations are managed well and appropriate action is taken. The manager has established links with the local authority designated officer and liaises as necessary.

The organisation has a generally robust approach to recruitment. However, there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that gaps in employment have been robustly identified and explored in every case.

Health and safety in the home is generally well managed. Routine checks, drills and maintenance of health and safety systems and appliances are undertaken as required. These ensure that young people know what to do in case of an emergency and that the home remains a safe place for those who live and work there. There is evidence that a first floor window has been used by a young person to leave the house. There are restrictors in place but on the advice of the fire service young people are shown how to disable these, in case they need to make an emergency exit in the event of fire. There is no risk assessment on these windows either to demonstrate that it is an approved fire exit (part of the fire risk assessment) or that it should be restricted.

Leadership and management

good

There is a well experienced and suitably qualified Registered Manager in post. She was the Registered Manager for another home in the organisation from October 2010 to December 2013, when she transferred to this home. She holds a Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care and Children and Young People's Services (Children and Young People's Residential Management). She provides strong and effective leadership, working closely with the Operations Director for the organisation. Partner agencies value the role of the manager, describing her as 'very supportive and understanding' both in working with them and the young people. The manager has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. She works to address any shortfalls with a clear focus on improving outcomes for young people. She is prepared to make difficult decisions and is challenging of local authorities. The manager has addressed the two requirements and two recommendations arising from the last inspection. Monitoring is now more robust as a result, leading to improvements in the care being provided by the home.

In the last year there have been considerable changes in the staff team. There have been transfers of staff between homes within the organisation and others have left, for a variety of reasons. Any shortfalls in staffing numbers have been addressed by the deployment of bank staff, a number of whom have previously been employed full time by the organisation. This has provided continuity for young people and maintained levels of experience. However management recognise the impact on group dynamics and consistency. New appointments have been made to vacant posts to address this and reduce the current short term high reliance on bank staff.

Staff benefit from a robust training programme that equips them for their role, for example external training on child sexual exploitation was provided in April 2014. They feel well supported by the management through regular supervision, team meetings and targeted case discussions with a therapist. The majority of staff hold the level 3 qualification required. There is work in progress to achieve the new expectation that all existing staff hold the qualification by 2016.

The statement of purpose has been updated and placing authorities express the view that the home meets the stated aims and objectives and is open to young people with complex needs. Young people and placing authorities feel that the home actively listens to their views and responds positively to any concerns or observations made. The manager completes end of placement reports. These clearly identify the progress that a young person has made as well as learning points for the staff team.

Records are stored securely, well maintained, detailed and cross reference appropriately. They provide a clear account of young people's time in the home and the progress they have made. The organisation is in the process of moving to greater electronic record keeping. All significant events are reported to Ofsted as required

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

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.