

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC020133
Inspector	Rachel Griffiths
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Arnfield Care Limited
Registered person address	Brookbank House Wellington Road, Bollington Macclesfield Cheshire SK10 5JR
Responsible individual	Wayne Relf
Registered manager	Elaine Carole French
Date of last inspection	27/03/2014

Inspection date	29/10/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	None

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	outstanding
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This is a home that provides short-term care to young people who are experiencing significant crises in their lives. They arrive with a history of placement breakdowns and a history of significant risk-taking or offending behaviour.

From their admission, young people make exceptional progress from their starting points in all areas of their lives. Young people are kept as safe as possible and their lives quickly stabilise. Risk-taking behaviours significantly reduce or even stop. Young people start to feel safe and secure and they develop some control over their lives. They start to realise their own potential and develop aspirations for the future.

Young people develop exceptionally good relationships with a consistent, committed and encouraging staff team who have high aspirations for them. The staff strive for young people to achieve and reach their full potentials. Young people develop the confidence to engage in wide-ranging educational and leisure activities. As a result, young people develop life skills and their sense of achievement and self-esteem significantly improve.

Young people are completely at the centre of all work taking place. Their views are instrumental to the running of the home. They are fully consulted in the formulation of risk assessments and future care plans. This helps young people to feel valued. It

also means that they are more likely to work within the guidelines of risk assessments and towards the goals of their future care plans.

The management team is creative and inspirational. Leaders and managers robustly monitor the progress young people make and demonstrate the value that they add to young people's lives. The home's development plan demonstrates how the manager intends to improve the home further to maintain an outstanding service for young people.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home, which is owned by a private company, is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. Education is provided 365 days a year, both on site and through camps and outdoor activities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/03/2014	Interim	good progress
20/11/2013	Full	outstanding
23/01/2013	Interim	good progress
12/07/2012	Full	outstanding

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Young people achieve outstanding outcomes from their starting point while living in this home. One professional working with the home commented in respect of a young person: 'The progress she has made is phenomenal. She came at extreme risk and her life has been turned around. She is now making choices for her future.' Young people's lives stabilise, they experience structure and they develop a range of life skills. As a result, their future life chances are significantly improved.

Young people's risk-taking behaviours significantly reduce or stop altogether while living in this home. For example, young people who previously frequently went missing from home or regularly committed criminal offences no longer do so. Young people start to think about the impact and consequences of their previous patterns of behaviour for themselves and others because of work undertaken with them. This helps them develop insight, self-protection skills, empathy and more socially acceptable behaviour.

All young people re-enter education while living in this home. This is after a significant period of not being in education or having no interest or belief that they could benefit from engaging in education. All young people are participating in full time individualised packages of education. Their attendance is excellent. Young people start to enjoy learning and start achieving. As a result of this, young people's opportunities and choices in adulthood are greatly improved.

Young people enjoy vastly improved physical and emotional health as a result of living in this home. They eat regular healthy meals, they attend regular health appointments relating to their specific physical and emotional health needs and they engage in regular physical activity. One young person said: 'I feel so much better. I have gained weight. Before, my emotions were everywhere. I am so much happier and healthier.' Close attention and support in respect of young people's individual health needs impact positively and significantly in terms of their emotional and physical well-being.

Young people benefit physically and emotionally from engaging in a wide range of outdoor pursuits and leisure activities within the local community. For example, young people participate in activities such as caving, canoeing, climbing and mountain biking. Other young people have joined local sports teams and drama groups. All young people get involved in community events and recently held a charity coffee morning. As a result, young people have fun, they make friends, they develop a sense of achievement and they are making a positive contribution to their community.

Young people's relationships with their families develop and improve while they are living in this home. Young people develop insight and understanding into their own

difficulties and those that affect their families. For some, contact has progressed from being closely supervised to young people and their families enjoying time on their own within the community. Family relationships are very important to young people. They benefit greatly from these improved relationships in terms of their sense of identity. It also provides an opportunity for young people to have a solid family support network in the longer term.

Young people are extremely well prepared for their move from this placement into their longer-term placement. They develop a better understanding of relationships and their traumatic histories. They develop coping skills, confidence and a sense of self-worth. Transitions are carefully planned so that when young people do move on, they have a clear understanding of their plan and what to expect. As a result of the support provided to young people during their time in the home and excellent transition processes, young people have the opportunity to develop positive relationships and achieve better outcomes when they move on to the next stage of their lives.

Quality of care

outstanding

Young people enjoy extremely positive and constructive relationships with staff. All speak in extremely positive terms about them. One young person said: 'You grow a bond with them, they are brilliant, they are really understanding.' Observations of staff also demonstrate that they are extremely supportive and caring. The positive and trusting relationships young people have with staff help to provide a secure emotional base from where young people can develop.

The staff team are very experienced and knowledgeable. One social worker said: 'I am really impressed; staff have a really good understanding of the young person's needs.' They provide young people with structure and consistent boundaries. A social worker said: 'It is a calm and supportive environment. Staff are very realistic and honest.' A young person said: 'The rules are very fair and all the staff are the same with consequences.' The very supportive and consistent approach enhances young people's sense of stability and security. It also helps them to make excellent progress behaviourally and emotionally.

Staff have extremely high aspirations for young people. One professional said the staff's ethos is, 'let me see the person and not the behaviours'. Staff believe in young people and that they can achieve things. Staff make young people believe they are worth it. One young person said: 'Staff proper care and want the best for you. It is more than a job to them. They have helped me change my life. I now have a different perspective. I now want to go to college.' Staff help young people realise their dreams. As a result, young people have significantly improved opportunities to reach their full potential.

Staff and young people benefit greatly from the support of in-house psychological

and educational services. This, and extremely positive relationships with partner agencies, ensures that young people have the best opportunity to access appropriate support, address their difficulties and reach their full potential in the future. For example, through partnership working, young people are able to engage with drug and alcohol support programmes without delay. Other young people benefit from participating in work experience organised through links with local colleges and businesses. A strong multi-agency approach helps to ensure that young people's unique preferences and needs are met to the highest possible standard.

The managers and staff are strong advocates for young people. While they have positive and strong working relationships with other professionals, they are not afraid to challenge them to achieve the best possible outcome for young people. For example, a young person who was extremely unhappy about her contact arrangements was supported to make representations to her social worker and independent reviewing officer about the significant progress she had made and the reasons why her contact arrangements should change. This resulted in changes being made which more appropriately met the young person's needs and reflected the progress she had made.

Young people are respected and valued in the home. They have no complaints but fully understand how to make complaints should they wish to do so. Their views are continually sought in respect of the day-to-day running of the home. They are involved with the recruitment of new staff. At weekly young people's meetings, young people discuss menus and activities for the week as well as any other issue they wish to add to the agenda. The meetings are also used as an opportunity to celebrate young people's achievements and provide rewards for these. Young people are also fully involved with their own care planning. One young person said: 'I am really well consulted about my plans; where I move to next, what college course I want to do. I have been listened to and am happy with my plan to move nearer to home soon.' Excellent levels of communication and consultation impact positively on young people. They feel listened to and this helps raise their self-esteem and confidence.

The home is well maintained and provides a very comfortable and homely environment. A young person said: 'It really feels like home.' Young people's bedrooms are personalised and the communal areas of the home are decorated with topical posters and pictures produced by young people. These, and photographs of young people engaged in different activities, remind young people of their excellent achievements and experiences. This helps them feel valued and further improves their self-esteem.

Keeping children and young people safe **outstanding**

Young people are kept safe as a result of the actions staff take to support and protect young people. One young person said: 'Coming here has saved my life. I am now calmer and more settled. Staff keep me safe. Before I did not see danger in the things I did. Now I can see danger.' Excellent safeguarding procedures implemented by staff, high staffing ratios and intensive work undertaken with young people in respect of risk-taking behaviours help to create an emotionally and physically safe environment for young people. Consequently, young people have a strong sense of safety and well-being while living in this home.

Allegations or concerns which come to the attention of the management team are dealt with robustly and in consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer. For example, when a young person expressed concerns about the practice of a member of staff, the responsible individual swiftly followed the home's complaints procedure and undertook a thorough investigation. In this instance no safeguarding concerns were identified and the young person was content with the outcome of the investigation. The swift actions of the management team and their excellent understanding and oversight of safeguarding practices significantly reduces the risk of harm to young people.

The wide range of exciting and potentially dangerous outdoor activities young people participate in while living in this home are very robustly risk assessed. This, as well as having expertly trained and qualified instructors working for the organisation, means that young people have the opportunity to enjoy and achieve and take reasonable and measured risks without their safety being compromised.

Staff receive comprehensive safeguarding training and they are extremely aware of how to keep young people safe. Comprehensive and individualised risk management plans are implemented by staff. For example, in respect of young people who have a history of going missing, staff know the procedures to minimise the risk of this occurring and what to do if it happens. Staff knowledge, high staffing levels and excellent working relationships with the police have helped significantly reduce the amount of times young people go missing. On the rare occasion it does occur, young people have been swiftly found and welcomed back into the home. Comprehensive work undertaken with young people within the home regarding the risks associated with going missing has also helped to significantly reduce risk in this area.

Young people's behaviour is well managed in this home. An embedded ethos of proactive behaviour management is effective. Young people are motivated by the incentives which are on offer in return for positive behaviour. Staff discuss with young people what strategies are most effective for them at times when they are feeling challenged. These strategies are implemented into each young person's behaviour management plan. Young people understand that physical intervention is only used as a very last resort in order to protect them or others from being harmed. As a result of these strategies, incidents of physical intervention are low. When physical intervention is used, incidents are well recorded and young people and staff are always debriefed. The effectiveness of physical intervention is analysed by the

management team. When it has been identified that physical intervention has not been particularly effective, additional expertise and guidance are sought to explore alternative options and improve practice in this area.

Recruitment and selection processes are robust and safe. All staff have been recruited and checked appropriately. This ensures that only those people who are suitable to work with young people and do not pose a risk to young people are employed.

The home is a physically safe and secure environment. All health and safety issues are addressed thoroughly and to a high standard. A recent health and safety audit completed by an independent company concluded: 'Overall the health and safety arrangements in this home are very good indeed and the staff should be praised for their efforts and encouraged to maintain high standards.' As a result, young people's health and well-being are better maintained.

Leadership and management

outstanding

The Registered Manager is very experienced and has been in post as the manager of this home for the last seven years. She holds the equivalent management qualifications required by the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

The management team is inspiring and motivational. Their enthusiasm and high standards filter down to the staff team. One staff member said: 'The managers are brilliant. They encourage us to develop and get qualifications.' Staff feel motivated and morale is high. They share the managers' vision of ensuring that the quality of care and outcomes for young people continue to improve. This is also reflected in the home's development plan.

All staff are exceptionally well trained. Induction programmes are comprehensive and a dedicated training officer ensures that all staff remain fully refreshed in key areas such as safeguarding, first aid, fire safety and behaviour management. In addition to this, specific training programmes are accessed in respect of a wide variety of issues which affect the young people living in this home. Examples include drug abuse, gang culture, autistic spectrum disorders and attachment issues. As a result, staff are exceptionally well equipped to meet the needs of the young people they are caring for. In addition, staff attend regular team meetings where they discuss practice issues and they receive regular supervision with a very reflective and supportive management team. This ensures that practice is monitored and provides scope for further improvements in the delivery of care. Young people benefit greatly from being cared for by skilled, motivated and well-supported staff who are exceptionally well equipped to meet individual needs.

The home's Statement of Purpose is thorough and detailed. A social worker commented that she was very impressed and that, 'a young person is being provided

with exactly what had been promised'. Consequently, stakeholders and parents have absolute clarity in respect of the service the home offers.

The home has excellent systems to monitor the progress young people make while living in the home. Weekly progress reports enable young people, parents and social workers to see what young people have achieved over time, educationally, behaviourally, and in terms of their leisure pursuits and their health. Data collected in respect of young people's patterns of behaviour, including instances of young people going missing from care and instances when physical intervention is used, is also analysed on a quarterly basis. Not only do these monitoring systems ensure that young people's placement plans remain up to date and effective, they also enable the manager to demonstrate how effective the home is in improving outcomes and the future life chances for young people.

Improvement is further promoted by the home's external and internal monitoring systems. An independent person visits the home on a monthly basis and carries out checks to monitor the welfare of young people. These checks identify the strengths of the home as well as minor shortfalls, which are swiftly addressed. Internal quality assurance systems are thorough. Excellent consultation with young people and stakeholders and a detailed analysis of patterns and trends help to ensure that young people continue to consistently receive exceptionally high standards of care.

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.