

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC033502
Inspector	Parveen Hussain
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Registered person address	City Hall Centenary Square BRADFORD West Yorkshire BD1 1HY
Responsible individual	Julie Jenkins
Registered manager	Christopher Stephen Workman
Date of last inspection	26/02/2014

Inspection date	26/11/2014
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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	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people receive good levels of care, support and guidance to help them make progress and keep themselves safe. Staff work hard to ensure young people are kept safe.

Young people partake in individual key work sessions which identify and address any anxieties or concerns they may have whilst providing insight into their behaviours. Staff are consistent, care about the welfare of the young people in placement and have high aspirations for their futures. This helps improve young people's confidence and promotes good outcomes.

Young people are all engaged in full time education provision and the majority of young people benefit from excellent attendance.

Young people's health needs are identified early into placement and both staff and young people work closely with professionals to address these. The home promotes good relationships with mental health services, the LAC nurse, substance misuse and sexual health services. This ensures young people benefit from a timely response when needed.

The majority of young people feel their views are taken on board and are respected. Young people are encouraged to respect the diverse needs of others and benefit from good relationships with staff.

The registered manager is highly experienced and has several years' experience in the field of residential care. The staff team are also well established and appropriately qualified. There is effective internal and external monitoring of the home. This leads to the registered manager having good oversight of the quality of care young people receive. As a result the manager is able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the home.

There are some shortfalls relating to staffing levels and supervision which result in two requirements being made. A recommendation relating to the lack of homely environment is also made.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by a local authority. It provides care and accommodation for up to seven young people who have experienced emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/02/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
31/10/2013	Full	good
08/01/2013	Interim	good progress
12/07/2012	Full	good

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
25 (2001)	ensure that there is at all times a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced persons working at the children's home (Regulation 25 (1)).	18/01/2015
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed by him receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal (Regulation 27 (4)(a)).	18/01/2015

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take

account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated. Avoidable hazards are removed as is consistent with a domestic setting, namely a loose carpet in the bedroom (standard 10.3)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people benefit from nurturing care and good relationships with staff. They develop trusting relationships with staff and other professionals involved in their care. This leads to longevity, stability and security of placements, which helps young people engage with specialist services. This significantly increases their life chances and they make progress in all aspects of their life. In comparison to their starting points, young people develop a positive self-view and are supported to understand their personal experiences in accordance with their age and level of understanding. This is achieved through life story work and sensitive discussions with staff.

Young people are in good physical health and benefit from routine and specialist health care. The majority of young people are responsive to the input of therapeutic services and experience better physical and psychological health as a result. Input from these services helps young people understand the underlying factors which negatively impact upon their wellbeing. Some young people take advantage of the close interaction with staff through key work sessions and learn to manage their emotions and make sensible choices in their life. This results in young people showing insight into their lifestyles and helps reduce risk taking behaviours such as alcohol and substance misuse.

All young people are attending school or alternative provision with many achieving one hundred per cent attendance. Those aged over sixteen attend full time further education, enhancing their opportunities and outcomes. Young people receive additional support with homework and benefit from focused work and collaboration with education professionals. Those who are less focused quickly re-engage with opportunities offered to them. Some young people achieve good GCSE awards and make strides in their chosen career pathways whilst others are trying different options before deciding which pathway to pursue.

Some young people feel their lives have improved during their stay at the home. They participate and engage with local youth clubs, cadets and advocacy services including the local authority's Children in Care Council. They take on service wide initiatives and promote the status of looked after children. Young people take part in recruitment initiative within the council. One young person participated in the interview process for the assistant manager of the home. Another young person took the opportunity to shadow the assistant director of children's services for a day and received glowing feedback. Such positive experiences enable young people to contribute to the running of the home and their wider community whilst enhancing their outlook on life.

Young people are encouraged to focus on their future and develop practical skills such as cooking and budgeting which helps them with their transition into adulthood. Young people develop their confidence and self-esteem through having quality contact with family members and other important people in their lives. This helps young people reinforce their sense of identity whilst helping them make sense of the reasons they are in care. Young people maintain links with the home having left care and continue to be supported for significant periods thereafter. This ensures young

people gain the necessary skills required to be successful in future.

Quality of care

good

Staff ensure young people receive a good quality of care. This is driven by the manager who is active in delivering care to young people. Staff work hard to ensure young people enjoy positive, warm and nurturing relationships with them and with each other. This is confirmed by some young people living at the home and leads to them developing trust and confidence in staff. Some young people articulate that staff care about them, consult them and listen to their views. This enables young people to take an active part and have some influence in the running of the home. For example, young people are encouraged to identify their favourite foods and then support staff in preparing these meals. Young people choose what to eat, wear and how they spend their free time. In instances where young people's views are not acted upon, they are supported to understand the reasoning behind this. This level of open and honest communication promotes strong relationships and integrity in young people.

Staff encourage young people to participate in fortnightly residents meetings where their views are acknowledged and discussed. Complaints and grumbles by young people are responded to by a caring staff team and where necessary are further addressed through individual key work sessions. Staff provide opportunities for young people to voice their dilemmas and respond using a sensitive and caring approach. The consistency of this response by staff helps young people to settle in placement and benefit from the quality of home life available.

Staff are passionate about young people doing well and want the best outcomes for them regardless of their individual needs. The manager and staff work hard to ensure care plans are up to date and tailored to accurately reflect young people's diverse and changing needs. Staff encourage young people to take part and contribute to their plans. This ensures they are fully informed and have some influence over the care they receive presently and in the future. A good example of this is how young people encounter a week of semi-independent living in a flat with a realistic budget in line with benefit rates. This excellent initiative provides early insight as to whether young people are suited and able to manage in such accommodation. It also ensures appropriate support and planning takes place to help young people succeed in their chosen pathway for transition.

Written records made by staff are transparent and are available for other local authority professionals to view through the council's electronic information system. This strategy enables care staff and social workers to work better together, keeping young people's needs central to care practices in the home.

Staff work collaboratively with partner agencies to ensure young people have access to targeted high quality support. This includes intervention from mental health services and the looked after children's nurse who visit the home regularly for

consultations, training and input. In addition, there are excellent arrangements in place with West Yorkshire Police who have a designated officer for residential care services. Such collaborative working ensures the physical and emotional well being of young people is actively promoted and helps them take more responsibility for their personal health and safety.

Staff have very good relationships with education professionals and work hard to ensure education plans are up to date and reflect young people's current needs. This enables them to keep abreast of the progress young people make and swiftly identifies where additional intervention is needed. In these situations, staff actively reinforce the importance of education and support young people with their targets and achievements. In cases where young people are less motivated, staff utilise financial incentives that effectively promote attendance in education and consistently support young people to make informed decisions about their future. This further motivates young people to maintain good attendance whilst making educational progress.

Staff facilitate meaningful and enjoyable activities for all young people regardless of their age, needs and behaviours. Staff support and encourage young people to access the gym and martial arts training. This helps them understand the importance of being healthy and active whilst developing trusting relationships. Young people like visiting the cinema or the bowling alley and engage with groups such as the cadets, youth clubs and Children in Care Council. This enables young people to access wider services and promotes integration within society. Placing authorities comment positively on the levels of interaction and quality relationships that exist between staff and young people. Despite the challenging behaviours of some young people, a social worker stated, 'Staff are consistent, committed and dedicated to improving outcomes for young people.'

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people are safe at the home and report feeling safe. There are occasions when young people witness challenging and aggressive behaviours of other young people. Staff work hard to minimise the impact of this and protect young people from all forms of harm. They work closely with partner agencies to identify triggers and underlying reasons for young people's challenging behaviours and seek strategies to manage them. Where appropriate, staff avoid calling the police to prevent young people unnecessarily being criminalised.

The management and staff have good relationships with the police. They work effectively in a preventative way with the missing person's coordinator, the community police officer and the designated officer for residential services. Staff are mindful of the impact aggressive behaviours have on young people's future relationships and recognise the serious consequences of this. The manager and staff are active at identifying interventions that potentially navigate young people away from these behaviours. An example of this is where the Registered Manager has identified domestic violence training and is making arrangements for young people to take part. This will help provide young people with insight into outcomes and

consequences of their behaviours and help them to make positive changes. Staff are proactive at helping young people understand the dangers of being missing from care, being sexually exploited and engaging in other risky behaviours. The majority of young people report staff are respectful and take their concerns seriously. Regular key work sessions take place which enable young people to discuss their anxieties and concerns. This also allows staff to discuss concerns regarding young people's safety and wellbeing and promote positive behaviours. Such individual sessions strengthen relationships between staff and young people and build on trust and respect.

Multi-agency risk management plans are adhered to. This ensures appropriate strategies are adopted to keep young people safe. Staff comply with protocols and communicate their concerns effectively with stakeholders. They adhere to and facilitate strategy meetings involving family members where it is felt to be beneficial to young people's welfare. At the same time the Registered Manager and staff work hard to promote young people's wishes and allow them to take reasonable risks appropriate to their age and understanding. This enables young people to take some responsibility for their welfare whilst enabling them to grow and develop.

Staff are well trained in techniques of de-escalation to resolve difficult situations. They use their good relationships with young people to encourage positive behaviours, reducing the need for physical intervention. Where physical intervention is warranted, records are clear, concise and in accordance with legislation. There has been one allegation of harm since the last inspection. The manager responded to it immediately to keep young people safe and the matter is being thoroughly investigated. This reinforces the message that the safeguarding of young people and their care is central to the running of the home. This is further supported by the home's thorough recruitment processes which ensure staff working at the home are carefully vetted. Young people are involved with recruitment processes and have some influence over who is recruited to work in the home. This has improved confidence and the ability of young people to articulate their views.

The home environment is physically safe and secure. Robust and regular safety checks are carried out at regular intervals of fire safety procedures and equipment. This ensures the home is a safe environment for all young people.

Leadership and management

adequate

Management of the home is consistent as the Registered Manager has been in post for the twelve years since the home first opened. The manager is appropriately qualified and significantly experienced in residential care. Previous requirements have been met with capacity for continuing improvements being demonstrated.

Shortfalls in staffing levels as a result of sickness within the home impact upon the effectiveness of the staff team in ensuring consistency of care for all young people. This is managed by casual staff employed by the local authority supporting the permanent staff team in meeting the needs of young people. Staff shortages impact on the manager's ability to ensure supervision levels are adequate and robust. This has led to several supervisions being cancelled in the past months. Arrangements for

rescheduling supervision are not effective or timely. This reduces opportunities for staff to feel supported and to benefit from reflective practice. In addition, it is likely to further impact on the care afforded to young people should staff continue to feel unsupported.

Permanent staff all hold the required care qualification. Staff undertake a wide range of training and are confident to use their skills and knowledge effectively. This promotes their competence and ensures their knowledge and understanding of the role is up to date and in line with best practice. Black workers within the team benefit from regular attendance and participation at the local authority's Black Workers Support Group. This addresses some of their diverse needs within the service and provides staff with the skills to teach young people the importance of respecting diversity. All permanent staff benefit from six days of training each year pro rata. This ensures their developmental needs are met and provides staff with an effective base to positively support young people.

Internal monitoring of the home by the Registered Manager is of good quality and robust. Consultation with young people, families and professional stakeholders is undertaken regularly. Placing social workers and reviewing officers are complimentary of the staff team and management of the home. A family member reported feeling they had not been kept fully informed. However staff are committed and have continued to liaise with family members and invite them to attend strategy meetings. The manager has good insight into the strengths of the home and is equally mindful of the areas that warrant improvement. This ensures the development plan is realistic and achievable.

External monitoring and scrutiny through the independent visitor takes place monthly and is equally robust. The monitoring reports provide good levels of evaluation into the care young people receive. This enables the Registered Manager to maintain good levels of oversight and ultimately impacts on the quality of care young people are afforded. As a result the manager is able to identify the impact and value living at the home has had on some young people accommodated here.

The statement of purpose is clear. It provides local authorities and interested parties with up to date information about the ethos of the home and its intended aims and objectives for young people. The levels of management monitoring contribute to the good quality of care and outcomes for young people.

The home lacks a warm, homely feel which was raised by a young person living at the home. Although the paintwork is regularly updated, budget constraints have led to the furniture and fittings in the home being dated and tired looking. Young people identified that they would like to be involved in making the home feel more modern, in line with a domestic setting. A loose carpet in one of the bedrooms requires attention as it poses a trip hazard. The manager is open to making improvements to the home environment.

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.