

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	23/06/2015
Unique reference number	SC355902
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Mr Andrew Roberts
Inspector	Mr Keith Riley

Inspection date	23/06/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained 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	Outstanding

SC355902

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people form stable and secure attachments. They say this feels like their home. They have a sense of belonging and purpose.
- Risk taking behaviour such as going missing is reducing.
- There is effective and efficient leadership and management. Proactive and collaborative working with other agencies is a strength.
- Staff are competent, well-trained and supportive of the young people. Morale is extremely high.
- Young people have access to specialist therapy, often engaging for the first time.
- Records are comprehensive and provide a detailed account of a young person's history, risks and current needs.
- Young people engage with their learning, often after a long period away from formal academic studies.
- There are well-planned strategies to learn practical and emotional skills leading to independence.
- Young people engage in a wide range of stimulating and constructive activities in the community.
- Staff go to great lengths to ensure young people have contact with their family and others important to them.

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/s 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*.

Recommendations

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

- Ensure any decisions to limit a child's access to any area of the home and any modifications to the environment of the home, must only be made where this is intended to safeguard the child's welfare. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child's needs, be properly recorded and be kept under regular review. (Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards, paragraph 3.10)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The setting offers care and accommodation for up to six female young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home is run by a private organisation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/03/2015	CH - Interim	Sustained effectiveness
02/10/2014	CH - Full	Good
26/03/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
<p>Young people are learning to reciprocate the dignity and respect afforded to them. They are reforming their negative view of adults and learning how to trust again. There are positive outcomes, such as young people accessing specialist services that they have historically resisted. Young people feel secure and that this is their home. A young person said, 'staff might do my head in but I know they still care'. A professional said, 'it feels like a family'.</p> <p>Staff treat young people as individuals. They demonstrate a thorough knowledge of their needs. They show an intimate and loving understanding of each young person's emotional well-being. An example is a key-worker arranged to come in while she was on annual leave, to take her key young person out for a birthday treat. A placing social worker said, 'the care home has gone above my expectations and I have been really impressed with their approach to working with (name of young person). She is thriving in placement and I feel the objectives are being met.'</p> <p>Staff go to great lengths, often driving considerable distances, to ensure young people access stimulating and varied activities. Young people develop a sense of identity as they get to know themselves and what they enjoy doing. Examples are going to a music concert in a major city and learning how to horse-ride. Their self-esteem greatly improves. They feel confident and adventurous to try out other activities such as wakeboarding. During an activity in the local community a young person said, 'this is the best day of my life.'</p> <p>Young people enjoy good health. As well as enjoying a nutritious diet, they engage in physical activities, such as swimming and 'air hopping'. They are encouraged to attend all health appointments. When they refuse, they playfully say they will get the 'lecture' from staff. Young people attend the re-booked appointments. They engage with other professionals who come into the home to help them reduce risk-taking behaviours, such as substance misuse or smoking. Current strategies are successful with a reduction in such behaviours.</p> <p>Young people's emotional health is of paramount importance. They have easy access to the homes clinical psychologist. She ensures that young people have access to the correct therapy and therapist of their choice. Young people begin to understand their life story and the impact on their lives. Staff have access to the psychologist after hours for specialist advice and support. Consequently, significant incidents, challenging behaviours requiring physical intervention and self-harm are virtually unknown. A placing social worker said, 'they have brought her through a tricky period of her life, the previous incidents are a distant memory now.' A young person won an award for the progress she has made since coming into care.</p>	

Young people understand the strategies staff use to keep them as safe as possible. This means limiting access to some areas, such as the food cupboard and some downstairs rooms at night. The strategies are not underpinned by a clear, written risk assessment nor are they regularly reviewed. Most placing social workers are aware of, and agree to, the procedures. There is a risk that the strategies affect those young people who do not need them. Such practice may become embedded in the culture of the home when it is no longer required.

There is a creative approach to promoting independence. Young people engage enthusiastically in the well-planned programmes. They are keen to share their skills, such as cooking, for the entire household. As well as learning practical skills, young people are prepared psychologically for independent living. They are equipped with good social skills. Relationships with parents, family members and professionals involved in their lives are significantly improved.

Young people's views are extremely important to staff. They can choose their therapist, activity, meal and personalise their rooms. They particularly enjoy a constructive and close relationship with their key worker. There are numerous opportunities for them to voice their individual views as well as their corporate one. They access the complaints procedure if necessary. Any complaints are taken extremely seriously, thoroughly investigated with a clear written response to the complainant.

Young people are able to see family members and other individuals who are important to them. Even though young people may be placed from another county, staff ensure young people have face-to-face contact. There are successful outcomes, such as a young person now staying overnight with her family once a week.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
<p>There is well-coordinated care planning and risk management. The clinical psychologist provides an opinion prior to admission as to the type of therapy that may benefit the young person. Staff are aware of the vulnerabilities of the young person being admitted and plan accordingly.</p> <p>Young people with a history of missing from care and possible sexual exploitation are admitted into the home. Individual risk assessments guide staff as to the nature of the risk and responses. They work incredibly well with other agencies, such as the police, to contact, search for and return young people to the home.</p>	

High-risk strategy meetings are convened when necessary. Key information is shared resulting in positive outcomes, such as the issuing of harbouring notices by police. Individuals independent of the home talk to young people on their return. Staff work with young people to help them understand the risks. Therapists work with young people to address the underlying psychological issues. Diversionary and distraction strategies are applied, such as the provision of a wide range of activities. A placing social worker said, 'I have nothing but praise. The staff are helpful, responsive and very committed. They go to extraordinary lengths to keep (name of young person) safe when she absconds.' Another professional said, 'the staff are working well with us at the moment regarding young people going missing and they play an active part in trying to locate and bring them home.' The number of significant missing person incidents has decreased.

Young people are emotionally safe in this home. They are free to express themselves in a family like environment where they feel secure. Staff listen to their anxieties and fears, even if this means sitting up during the night with them. Young people say they feel safe and want to stay long-term in the home. There is excellent oversight of their emotional well-being by the clinical psychologist. Emotional resilience is measured with a clinical tool. Progress is extremely positive. A placing social worker said, '(name of young person) is receiving a high standard of care and wants to remain in the placement.' Young people who have been deeply hurt are in the right setting to receive the specialist support they need.

Staff are trained in the home's behaviour management program. They understand how severe emotional disturbance can be presented through behaviour, such as a young person messing up their bedroom and personal belongings. Staff take advice from the clinical psychologist, even after hours if necessary. Young people are fully supported to find alternate ways to express their difficult and painful emotions. They respond well to the strong boundaries that staff consistently apply. De-escalation strategies are successful. Physical interventions are minimal. Staff fully support young people with restorative justice techniques so they are not criminalised.

Policies guide staff about e-safety. They do not explicitly include guidance on the use of staff personal mobile phones. There is no immediate concern. Young people enjoy asking a staff member to have a 'selfie' with them. Young people are individually assessed as to the risks in the cyber world, in consultation with their social worker. This means that some young people are able to have access to electronic devices while keeping themselves safe.

Staff are well trained in child protection procedures. They are fully aware of what to do in the event of any concerns or allegations. There has been none since the last inspection.

All necessary health and safety checks are in place so young people live in a safe environment.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
<p>The Registered Manager is an efficient and effective leader, who puts the needs of young people first. An example is the recent arrangement for the hours of clinical psychology available to young people to be increased. A professional said the Registered Manager, 'is very organised, efficient and professional. Everything is completed to a high standard. He has a good relationship with the young people, staff and professionals.'</p> <p>A strength of the leadership is the quality and extent of professional and constructive relationships that are formed with other agencies. The Registered Manager does not work in isolation. He ensures the relevant professionals are working with the young people. They are getting the right support, guidance, therapy and advice they need. There are positive outcomes. Young people who historically have not engaged in therapy have therapeutic input for the first time. They look after themselves by engaging with health professionals, for example, they are up to date with vaccinations and have specialist eye treatment. They attend school or college and make excellent progress in relation to their starting points. Young people have goals in life. They know what to do to achieve their goals. Their aims in life are underpinned with the strong inter-agency working.</p> <p>Staff speak highly of the leadership. They say they are very well supported and trained to deliver high quality care. Clearly, young people are at the centre of practice. Every decision is made to ensure they continue to receive the best quality of care. A member of staff said, 'I love it here, it is so focused on the girls.' A professional said, 'her key-worker is amazing with her.' Another staff member said 'there are clear handovers, effective communication during the day and a de-brief at the end of every shift. A senior manager is available on-call at any time.' A third staff member said that supervision helps to reflect on practice and excellent support is given. They are able to talk about the impact the work has on their own emotions through formal supervisions. This includes a clinical supervision with the home's psychologist if staff feel they need that level of support. A member of staff said, 'staff morale is high and we work well together to meet the needs of the young people'.</p> <p>Young people are involved in the recruitment process. They interview potential staff and give their view on the applicant. Candidates come into the home and their interactions with young people are observed by the clinical psychologist. She also gives a view as to their suitability. This gives every chance of a successful appointment. Staff retention is excellent.</p>	

There is rigorous monitoring of the home. The Registered Manager uses statutory reporting processes to analyse practice and progress. An independent visitor provides objective oversight. He produces a report with recommendations to improve practice. The Registered Manager ensures these are implemented. There is continual reflection as to whether the home is achieving its aims and objectives as set out in the clear up-to-date Statement of Purpose, which it is.

Communal areas are maintained to a very high standard. Equally, most young people's bedrooms are of excellent quality. Some bedroom furniture was seen to be damaged. The Registered Manager is aware. He works with the clinical psychologist to address the underlying needs causing some young people to damage their rooms. He works with the maintenance person to ensure there is ongoing refurbishment and replacement.

Case records are of an outstanding quality. They clearly describe the background of the young people and how to support them. Daily records and regular review described the achievements of the young people. There are regular, detailed reports sent to placing social workers who speak very highly of the communication with the home.

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 looked after children 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 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 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 who 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*.

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