

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	18/08/2015
Unique reference number	SC020133
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 French
Inspector	Rachel Griffiths

Inspection date	18/08/2015
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	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceeds the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC020133

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Young people who arrive at this home in crisis and with a significant history of risk-taking behaviours are exceptionally well supported by staff. Risk-taking behaviours significantly reduce, and in some cases, stop.
- Comprehensive risk management and behaviour support plans consistently implemented by a highly skilled staff team provide young people with a high level of safety.
- Young people speak extremely positively about their experiences of living in the home. They develop trusting and positive relationships with caring and committed staff who provide them with high levels of praise and encouragement, alongside structure, routine, and clear and consistent boundaries.
- From their starting points, young people make exceptional progress in all aspects of their development.
- Young people feel respected and valued. Their views contribute to the running of the home. They are fully involved in the preparation and review of their own care plans and risk management plans.
- A multi-disciplinary approach to each young person's care is highly effective. Working practices between care staff, staff from the on-site school, outdoor educators and the home's psychologist are cohesive. This, as well as excellent links with external agencies, ensures that young people have bespoke care plans and packages of support that meet their individual needs.
- The management team are creative, aspirational and motivational. They continue to strive to make further improvements to an already outstanding service.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It provides short to medium-term crisis placements. The home is owned by a private company. 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
02/03/2015	CH - Interim	sustained effectiveness
29/10/2014	CH - Full	Outstanding
27/03/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress
20/11/2013	CH - Full	Outstanding

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>Outstanding</p>
<p>Young people achieve exceptional outcomes. A parent said: 'This home is fantastic in every way. My daughter has really come on in all aspects of her life, beyond anything I could have expected.' Young people report having extremely positive experiences and recognise the difference living in the home has made to their lives. One young person said: 'Being here has made me reflect on my life. I was at risk before. It has taken coming here to realise this. I would have ended up dead or kidnapped. Being here has helped me make the right choices. I am now going to go to college, I have a part-time job and in the future I want to go to university to study business.' Young people are provided with an excellent opportunity to address their difficulties and reach their full potential.</p> <p>Young people enjoy extremely positive and constructive relationships with staff. One young person commented: 'The staff are real people. They treat you like one of their own. The staff have been so good, all of them. They give me good advice, they are always there for me; they never let me down.' Observations of staff also demonstrate excellent relationships. There is lots of fun and laughter, high levels of praise and encouragement, and constant celebrations of achievements. The positive relationships young people develop with staff provide them with the stability and security that they need and deserve.</p> <p>Young people receive excellent standards of care because the staff are skilled and experienced and have an exceptionally good understanding of young people's individual needs. In respect of a young person recently admitted to the home a social worker said: 'The staff have grasped and understand her complex needs really well. They have adapted strategies to meet her specific needs. She could not have had a better start to a placement.' Another social worker commented: 'The staff have a very good understanding of young people's needs and they are creative in finding ways of helping them pursue their interests and develop their talents.' As a result, young people's life chances are enhanced.</p> <p>All young people re-enter into full-time education, often after having had a significant period of not being educated or having no interest or belief that they can achieve. Excellent joint working between the staff, on-site school teachers and outdoor educators ensure that each young person has an individualised package of education which is challenging but also reflects their strengths, interests and learning styles. Young people start to enjoy and achieve in education. A social worker commented: 'This young person had a long history of non-school attendance. She has made significant progress educationally. She is now fully</p>	

engaging, she has gained some qualifications and she is now due to go to college.' Young people develop aspirations for the future and a sense of achievement. Consequently, their opportunities and choices in adulthood are greatly improved.

Young people have access to appropriate, extensive and individualised leisure pursuits. All are engaged in a number of different leisure interests and exciting outdoor pursuits which they really enjoy. A young person said: 'Coming here and doing all the outdoor education has been amazing. I have been caving, gorge walking, rock climbing, bike riding and abseiling. I have also been on lots of camps. I am loving the countryside. I have time to think, it is lovely.' Young people also get fully involved in community activities. Some young people do work experience at local businesses and some have part-time jobs. The home has hosted a community barbeque where young people raised money for charity. A young person has also recently won a prize in the community scarecrow competition. The participation in leisure and community activities enables young people to feel an integral part of their community. It also provides them with an opportunity to have fun, socialise and stay healthy. As a result, they develop more confidence and improved self-esteem.

Young people are fully respected and valued. Their views are continually sought in respect of the day-to-day running of the home through weekly house meetings and through regular individual sessions with staff. Young people are also fully consulted in respect of every aspect of their care. They are involved in the preparation and review of their placement plans and risk management plans. A young person said: 'I have written my plan for the future and the staff are helping me to achieve this. Staff listen to me and value my opinions.' As a result of this, young people are more motivated to work towards goals which they have identified and wish to achieve. It provides them with a sense of control over their lives and helps raise their confidence and self-esteem.

Transitions for young people moving into the home are extremely well planned and carefully managed. Young people predominantly arrive in crisis and at short notice. However, prior to their arrival, the management team carefully considers all information available to them, their specific needs and the needs of the young people already living in the home. Camps are regularly used as a starting point, to enable young people to get to know the staff and help them understand the regime of the home before being gradually introduced to other young people. In respect of her admission, a young person said: 'I thought I would really struggle but I settled in well and I now feel really settled. I was made to feel really welcome by staff, I got the young people's guide, I was told about the rules, expectations and the activities available.' Careful planning and preparation for placements ensure that young people have the best opportunity to successfully settle into the home and feel more reassured and secure in their new environment.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
<p>Young people say they feel safe and they are so much safer living in this home. A young person said: 'This is a safe place to live. I am around staff who I know will keep me safe, staff who I can trust and I know I can rely on.' Another young person said: 'Here I know what is expected of me and that helps me to feel safe.' The positive relationships young people have with staff and the extremely consistent care that they provide give young people a strong sense of safety and well-being.</p> <p>Although there are sometimes tensions between young people within the home, staff manage these extremely well. Bullying is not tolerated. A young person said: 'There is not any bullying. The staff are good at managing the relationships between young people. If young people are not getting on, we go on camps to have a break from each other.' Individual and group work in respect of peer relationships, with an aim of helping them to develop mutual respect and understanding for each other, is effective. This, as well as high levels of staffing and the use of camps to provide young people with time out from the group, ensures that young people are able to live together in a settled environment. This provides young people with an improved sense of safety.</p> <p>Young people are protected as a result of extremely comprehensive risk management plans being implemented by staff. Young people who have been assessed as being at significant risk of harm are carefully monitored. This does not, however, prohibit them from participating in a wide range of exciting activities and experiences in the community. Rather, robust risk assessments enable young people to enjoy new experiences and take reasonable risks as part of their growth and development without their safety being compromised.</p> <p>Young people are helped and protected as a result of comprehensive programmes of work being undertaken regarding their individual difficulties and vulnerabilities. A social worker commented: 'I am very pleased with the direct work undertaken. This young person trusted no-one, but she has developed trust with her key team and the managers. She has become more open and has engaged in a programme of work to help keep her safer.' Positive working relationships with social workers and strong links with specialist support agencies also ensure that a consistent approach to care and support is provided. A social worker said: 'This young person needs a different approach to the usual strategies to reduce risk of child sexual exploitation. The staff and I are doing some training together with a specialist organisation to ensure that we are all supporting the young person in a consistent way.' As a result of individual work undertaken by staff and creative multi-agency packages of support, incidents of risk-taking behaviours such as criminal activity, aggression, substance misuse and going missing either significantly reduce over time, or in some cases, stop.</p>	

Despite young people having a significant history of going missing prior to living in this home and having been assessed as being at high risk of child sexual exploitation, there have been few such instances. The positive relationships young people have with staff, high levels of supervision, and the work undertaken with young people is effective in reducing risk. A young person said: 'Staff are good at keeping us safe. They do key-working sessions about sexual exploitation, the risks of running away, how to manage anger and recognising triggers. I have calmed down now.' On the few occasions that young people have gone missing since the last inspection, swift reporting and strong relationships with the police have resulted in them being swiftly located and welcomed back into the home. In respect of the most recent incident, a vulnerable person's officer said: 'I am very impressed with how the home has dealt with it. It is clear that the managers have good insight into risk and procedures and it is clear that they work closely with social workers.' As a result, young people are provided with a high level of protection in this area.

Young people's behaviour is exceptionally well managed. Positive relationships, extremely consistent boundaries and proactive behaviour management approaches as outlined in the home's statement of purpose, are very effective. A social worker said: 'This young person's behaviour is really well managed. Staff are very calm and consistent. There is no budging with boundaries, all staff are on the same page with consistent responses.' A young person commented: 'The staff are straight with me. They do not tiptoe around, they say things as they are. I really appreciate that. I know where I stand with them. If I do things well, staff praise and reward, and if not, I know what the consequences will be.'

Physical interventions are only used as a last resort. The number of instances remain low, although there has been a slight increase since the last inspection. The reasons for this are fully analysed by the management team. Young people and staff are always fully de-briefed following incidents. The manager thoroughly analyses the effectiveness of interventions. This ensures practice in this area remains of a high standard and increases the capacity to improve practice further.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
<p>The registered manager is suitably qualified and extremely experienced. She is confident, inspirational and ambitious for young people. She is held in high regard by young people, the staff team and professionals from partner agencies. A member of staff said: 'The managers are brilliant, they are really supportive and work closely with us and the young people.' Staff share the manager's vision of</p>	

ensuring that the quality of care and experiences of young people continue to improve. Staff morale is high and an extremely cohesive staff team ensures that young people are extremely well supported.

The registered manager's and deputy manager's knowledge and insight into the complex needs of young people living in the home are excellent. Their practice is informed by theories which underpin complex behaviours. It is developed and further enhanced by keeping abreast of the latest research into matters which affect young people living in care. This knowledge, alongside experience and high levels of consultation with young people, with staff and with other professionals, is used to constantly identify ways to further improve the quality of care provided to young people. For example, after reviewing new research in relation to how some boys have difficulties in communicating their feelings and the emotional impact of them not having positive male role models, training for staff in relation to this has been organised.

Staff are well trained. In addition to mandatory training, staff continue to receive refresher training in safeguarding and behaviour management. They also undertake more specialised training in respect of a wide variety of issues that affect the young people they are caring for. For example, staff receive training in child sexual exploitation, attachment and trauma, gang culture and self-harm. In addition, staff have access to an independent psychologist who visits the home weekly to discuss aspects of young people's behaviour to gain further insight and advice regarding their specific needs. As a result, staff are extremely well equipped to meet the individual needs of young people living in the home.

Staff attend regular team meetings which discuss practice issues as well as new legislation, policies and procedures which underpin staff practice. Staff also receive regular high quality supervision which gives them the opportunity to reflect on their practice and the needs of the young people they are caring for. Productive team meetings and regular high quality supervision ensure that practice is monitored and it provides scope for further improvements in the delivery of care.

Multi- agency working is a strength of this home. The managers and staff have excellent working relationships with in-house experts as well as excellent links with external agencies and members of the local community. These strong relationships and links, combined with the manager's high aspirations and creativity, ensure that young people receive high quality support and have the best opportunity to reach their full potential.

The home's statement of purpose is comprehensive. It clearly sets out how young people will be helped and supported while living in the home. The young people's guide has recently been revised with the help and assistance of young people currently living in the home. It gives young people moving into the home some insight, through the eyes of their peers, into what it is like to live in this home.

Managers and leaders effectively monitor the progress young people make. On a quarterly basis, they do this in consultation with young people. Data in respect of their progress and patterns and trends in behaviour is collected and analysed. This ensures that placement plans and risk management plans remain effective and that changes are instigated to improve the quality and effectiveness of these plans. These monitoring systems not only demonstrate to placing authorities and parents what impact living in the home is having on young people, it also enables young people themselves to see how much progress they are making.

Quality assurance monitoring of the home, both externally and internally is effective. This, as well as new developments proposed by the management team, is indicative of a service that strives to improve what is an already outstanding service.

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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