

## Children's homes inspection - Full

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>23/09/2015</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>SC484402</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered person</b>	<b>Footsteps To Futures Limited</b>

<b>Responsible individual</b>	<b>Joseph Rafter</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Joseph Rafter</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Philip Cass</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>23/09/2015</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Good</b>
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
<b>how well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Good</b>

**SC484402**

## **Summary of findings**

### **The children's home provision is good because:**

- This is the home's first inspection since it opened in January 2015. Because the routines of the home were established quickly, young people benefit from consistency and structure. This helps them to feel secure.
- Competent managers ensure that all staff understand and implement the positive ethos of the home. As a result, a highly empathetic, supportive, and reflective staff team cares for young people.
- Behaviour management is effective. Staff are good communicators and are able to respond sensitively to young people in crisis. De-escalation strategies are effective so that restraint has not been required. The home goes to great lengths to ensure that young people are not unnecessarily criminalised.
- Most young people become significantly safer following admission to the home. This is because they reduce the frequency of missing from home incidents. Where risk taking behaviours do not reduce, managers work effectively with social workers to identify more suitable care provision.
- Each young person makes good educational progress. Established patterns of non-attendance are overcome because staff adopt a range of strategies to support young people to enjoy education.
- Emotional and mental health support is a key strength of the home. Specialist mental health professionals are directly employed. This ensures that high quality, comprehensive assessments are undertaken promptly. Young people also benefit from a range of therapeutic interventions, tailored to their preferences, which enable them to become increasingly emotionally resilient.
- Staff are well trained, and supported. As well as regular supervision with managers, they also receive guidance from mental health professionals. This means that they have a good understanding of the

## 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*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that ensure full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (3) (d), Schedule 2 (3))	30/10/2015

### Recommendations

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

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful and clear recording. This is with particular reference to the homes medication records. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 62, paragraph 14.4)

## **Full report**

### **Information about this children's home**

A privately owned company operates this children's home. It provides care and accommodation for three young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

### **Recent inspection history**

This is the homes first inspection.
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## Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>Young people say that they are happy and settled in their home. This is a positive achievement because the home provides care to young people with a significant history of placement breakdown. Care planning is of a high standard. Care plans are comprehensive and provide staff with detailed information about the needs of young people. The home is pro-active in identifying and meeting needs related to personal identity and culture. Effective care planning ensures that young people are cared for in a way that is tailored to their own individual needs and wishes.</p> <p>Keyworker sessions are used well to achieve care planning objectives. Where young people are resistant to structured individual work, staff are creative in finding other opportunities to share information, involve young people in decision making, and listen to their views. Young people feel confident to express their views. They feel that their views are listened to and respected. Young people say that they like the staff who care for them. Their ability to communicate with adults in a courteous, respectful manner is improving steadily because they are helped to practice their social skills as part of the daily routines of the home. For example, meal times are increasingly pleasant and sociable occasions. Staff act as good role models and provide clear expectations of conduct at the meal table.</p> <p>The staff team engage enthusiastically with young people. This particularly benefits those who find it difficult to make purposeful or constructive use of their time. Young people learn the value of healthy patterns of sleep and activity. Established routines enable young people who lacked stability in previous placements to feel secure. These routines are key to the home's therapeutic ethos. They improve the emotional health and well-being of young people. Staff say: 'We try to give them their childhood back, the routines mean that they can be regular kids again'. One young person has been supported to gradually develop age appropriate and healthy morning routines. This has enabled education attendance, and contributed to an improved sense of well-being. Her social worker feels that it is, 'a credit to the staff that she is back in education'.</p> <p>Where young people struggle to engage positively in education, they are well supported by staff who help them to overcome their anxieties. Consequently, young people develop strategies that enable them to cope, and eventually thrive, in school and college. Young people now look forward to achieving academic success. Because young people begin to develop realistic career aspirations following admission to the home, they are motivated to work hard at school.</p>	

The health needs of young people are well understood by staff. Young people develop improved health because they begin to take regular exercise. For example, current residents regularly swim, walk and go horse riding. They also have significantly improved diets. They receive good advice and guidance in relation to healthy eating. Young people confirm that they are fitter, and eat better food since moving into the home. Medication arrangements are generally strong. Where minor errors occur these are quickly identified and corrected. However, the recording of medication administration is not sufficiently clear. This has the potential to cause errors or lead to young people not receiving medication as prescribed.

The home provides on-site psychological and therapeutic services. Young people develop improved emotional and mental health as a result. The on-site services provide young people with the opportunity to begin to address the impact of early childhood trauma. Where therapeutic interventions are very difficult for some young people, and lead to a deterioration in their behaviour or social presentation, staff are well supported to manage this. For example, although there has been an increase in some self-harming behaviours, all staff have received training in self-harm awareness. Consequently, they have a very clear understanding of appropriate strategies to respond to such behaviours. Where close monitoring is required as a risk management measure, this is done sensitively and respectfully. Staff engage very well so that vulnerable young people generally feel cared for rather than supervised. This reduces any sense of institutionalisation.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with family members and other people who are important to them. This is because the home is good at helping them to cope positively with their emotions before, during, and after family visits. The well-being of young people is improved because they develop better relationships with their family following placement at the home. A social worker confirms that the staff and managers, 'work really well with family members'.

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>The home is a safe environment. Young people quickly develop trusting relationships with staff. They report that they feel safe in the home and have confidence in staff and managers to keep them safe. They also report that there is no bullying in the home. They are able to fully express their own personalities in the knowledge that they will be respected and valued by staff and their peers. This sense of security empowers young people to develop a positive self-view.</p>	

Behaviour management is effective. Staff demonstrate great empathy and patience when supporting young people in crisis. Very effective de-escalation strategies are based on the home's therapeutic model. Staff are supported to understand the underlying causes of challenging behaviours. Over time, young people begin to develop effective strategies to manage their own emotional responses. Staff use humour very well to de-escalate hostility. The commitment to positive engagement with young people contributes to the fact that there have been no restraints and minimal use of sanctions since the home opened. A social worker states that staff are, 'very clear, consistent and nurturing'.

In most cases, missing from home incidents become less frequent following admission. This significantly reduces young people's vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. Where young people's risk profile does not alter following admission, either because they run away from home immediately upon arrival or through deteriorating mental health conditions, the home takes swift action in conjunction with other agencies to identify placements that are more suitable.

Safeguarding procedures are robust and effective. All staff are provided with training commensurate to their role in the home. As a result, they have a good understanding of how to respond to suspicions or allegations of abuse. Strong safeguarding procedures reduce the possibility of young people becoming the victim of abuse or exploitation.

Safeguarding is further strengthened by safe recruitment practice. Because all candidates for employment are carefully vetted, there is a reduced risk that young people will be exposed to inappropriate adults. However, where the home has been unable to source a written reference from a previous employer, managers have relied on verbal references, combined with testimonials from former colleagues. While this has not affected the safety of young people, the failure to secure a clear written reference from a previous employer is not in line with best practice guidance.

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>A strong team of managers leads the home. The registered manager is well supported by his experienced deputy. Staff are provided with clear guidance during their regular supervision. Supervision is used very effectively to set high expectations of all staff. Staff report that they feel well supported by their managers through formal and informal mechanisms. The in-house psychologist provides additional supervision that enables staff to reflect on their practice and develops their understanding of the homes underpinning therapeutic model. Strong</p>	



on-call arrangements mean that staff access good quality advice in times of crisis or difficulty. This improves the safety and welfare of young people.

Staff benefit from a comprehensive programme of training. They are provided with training in a range of areas such as safeguarding, first aid, and the administration of medication. This ensures that they have the knowledge and skills necessary to provide the services set out in the home's statement of purpose. Specialist training is provided promptly to enable staff to understand and address any additional needs of young people living in the home. Staff report that they feel very well supported to achieve relevant qualifications. All staff members are qualified or undertaking an appropriate qualification in residential childcare.

Managers have strong relationships with safeguarding agencies and placing social workers. High quality reports written by the home ensure that clear and accurate information is provided to parents, social workers and other stakeholders. Effective communication means that the home contributes well to decision making processes and advocates effectively for young people. A social worker states that: 'Decision making is child centred and staff are good at communicating with me and other professionals'.

The management team is ambitious to develop the home further as it becomes established. Effective quality assurance processes, conducted by management and external visitors, promote improvement. These systems are good at identifying weaknesses and potential shortfalls. Actions generated through quality assurance processes are positively addressed by the home and result in improved recording, consultation, and multi-agency working.

## 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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