

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	26/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC439535
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Pebbles Care Limited
Registered person address	Rouse House, 2 Wyther Lane, Kirkstall, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS5 3BT

Responsible individual	Luiz Guilherme
Registered manager	Kimberley Crabtree
Inspector	Michele Hargan

Inspection date	26/02/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved Effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection	
<p>This home was judged Good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has Sustained Effectiveness.</p> <p>This inspection was brought forward as a result of concerns raised with Ofsted about the homes response to young people who go missing. The inspection found that while there has been an issue about care practice related to an incident of a young person going missing; the majority of staff follow best practice in trying to return young people to the home. In order to further address the matters raised the registered manager intends to meet with other professionals to clarify the action that staff take at such times. This is to ensure there is clarity by all those involved about the responsibilities of staff to safeguard young people. About what staff do to return young people home a social worker said, 'I have never known staff not go and collect a young person.'</p> <p>The registered manager has made good progress improving the internal and external appearance of the home. Ensuring young people live in good quality homely surroundings sends an important message to them about how much they are valued. This promotes their future aspirations. For example, the lounge has been redecorated; the bathroom is being refurbished; and there are firm plans in place to upgrade the kitchen. Young people's bedrooms have also been redecorated and refurbished. A young person said, 'It's a 100% better, it feels like a proper home not a care home.'</p> <p>The documents used to record occasional sanctions and physical intervention used in response to young people's behaviour now comply with legislation. This means the effectiveness of any measure is fully evaluated to ensure this addresses young people's underlying needs. This approach ensures staff are accountable for their actions and promotes young people's safety and wellbeing. The registered manager monitors these and withdraws any measures that are not helpful. This ensures young people's best interests are served at all times and encourages staff to reflect on the impact of their approach. A social worker said, 'I was very pleased that they did not restrain (name) unless absolutely necessary. Staff really tried hard with him to manage his behaviour.'</p> <p>Reports completed by the registered manager now demonstrate that meaningful</p>	

consultation takes place with young people about the care they receive. As a result, young people feel listened to and are able to influence the help and support they receive. This also shapes good care practice within the home. These reports evaluate the difference the home makes to young people and outcomes of the care they receive. Reflecting on these important aspects of young people's experiences in this way helps identify actions to achieve further improvement.

Procedures to assess young people's needs at the time of admission now take into account the potential impact on existing young people. This approach means new young people are carefully matched with the existing group. This promotes placement stability and means the home only admits young people when they are clear it is in their best interests. This helps allay young people's anxieties at times of transition; gradually helping them learn that staff can meet their needs without compromising the quality of their individual relationships. A senior member of staff said, 'The next young person admitted needs to be able to meet our existing young people beforehand.' These developments meet the three requirements and the four recommendations previously raised.

The turnover of staff has been significant since the previous inspection. This situation raises some concerns about the registered provider's management of staffs terms and conditions. As a result, this has necessitated some staff working in excess of their full time hours and the use of agency staff. While this situation is resolving as new staff are now appointed; any staff instability undermines the security of young people's placements and raises young people's anxieties.

Outcomes for young people who leave the home are mixed. This is because some young people leave the home on the basis of careful planning moving on to foster care while others leave as the result of escalating criminal behaviour. Nonetheless, during the time of their living at the home these young people have made some worthwhile progress. For example, by building meaningful relationships with staff and significant others including foster carers. Helping young people develop in this way meets their social and emotional needs. On the day of inspection a young person who had recently left the home phoned staff to tell them how he was doing. It was clear staff were pleased to hear from him and that a level of support continues for young people after they leave. About a young person's experience a social worker said, 'Staff tried to work with (name) and he asked me to pass on his thanks to staff. He said he broke the placement down and he was sorry.'

There is good partnership working between staff and other professionals. Consequently, social workers, parents and carers are well informed about young people's experiences and progress. Young people learn that staff are acting in their best interests as they see those involved working together. This builds trust with young people and helps them learn about compromise and negotiation. A social worker said, 'The staff did some really good work with (name). They facilitated contact with his mum and they looked after her really well too.'

Staff and professionals ensure they advocate on behalf of young people. This

means that when a young person wants to move on with their education they take the necessary action to help to them go to the school that best meets their academic needs. A social worker said, 'Our virtual head is helping with (name) move schools.'

Young people who live in the home are happy to be there. They feel valued because staff make it clear to them they enjoy spending time with them. This raises young people's self-esteem and promotes feelings of security helping them feel safe. A young person said, 'I like doing activities with staff rather than doing stuff on my own.'

The registered manager takes appropriate action, including contacting the designated officer for the local authority, so that any concerns about the conduct of staff are addressed. This promotes young people's safety and wellbeing. A social worker said, 'Staff are doing everything they can to keep (name) safe, she is in the safest place possible.'

Information about this children's home

The home may only provide care and accommodation for up to five children with emotional and or behavioural difficulties. The home is owned and operated by an independent provider.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/03/2015	Interim	Improved Effectiveness
30/10/2014	Full	Good
18/12/2013	Interim	Good Progress
24/04/2013	Full	Good

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

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

The registered person must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. In particular conduct exit interviews with staff aimed at identifying any reasons underlying their leaving work and take the necessary actions to increase the retention of staff. (The Guide to the Quality Standards Page 61, paragraph 13.1)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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