

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	12/01/2016
Unique reference number	SC035500
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Secure Unit
Registered person	South Gloucestershire Council
Registered person address	South Gloucestershire adults and health PO box 2083, Castle Street, Thornbury, Bristol, BS35 2BR

Responsible individual	Peter Murphy
Registered manager	Alison Sykes
Inspector	Kevin Whatley

Inspection date	12/01/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
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	Requires improvement
outcomes in education and related learning activities	Good

SC035500

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people say they feel safe. They speak positively of staff and live in a home where their individual needs guide the care they receive.
- Young people benefit from personalised and comprehensive care planning programmes. These balance their individual targets against the wider overall aims and objectives of the placement; encouraging them to take responsibility for their actions.
- Partnership working between care staff, health specialists and education professionals is robust. This inclusive approach means that young people make good progress in all aspects of their development.
- Young people receive good quality education. Most of them achieve well and make good or above expected progress in their learning. The approach to vocational and employment training enables young people to gain valuable experience prior to their release.
- Staff regularly consult with young people regarding the care they receive, their day-to-day experience of the home and the development of the service.
- A stable team of experienced staff understand the specific and often complex needs of young people. They display commitment and knowledge and talk enthusiastically about helping young people to make progress.
- The leadership team promote appropriately high expectations of practice and lead by example. The Registered Manager is passionate about consolidating individualised practice and aspires to improve the home further.

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
<p>8. The education standard</p> <p>In order meet the education standard the registered person must ensure that staff—</p> <p>2 (x) help young people to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the young person's relevant plans; In particular leaders and managers should implement an effective strategy that promotes the continuity of learning throughout the year, despite teaching staff absences.</p>	01/03/2016
<p>8. The education standard</p> <p>In order meet the education standard the registered person must ensure that staff—</p> <p>2 (i) help each young person to achieve their education and training targets, as recorded in the young person's relevant plans; In particular ensure a thorough analysis of data to enable all young people to fulfil their education potential while at the home, regardless of their length of stay.</p>	01/03/2016
<p>9. The enjoyment and achievement standard</p> <p>In order to meet the enjoyment and achievement standard the registered person must ensure—</p> <p>(2) (b) that each child has access to a range of activities that enable the child to pursue the child's interests and hobbies.</p>	01/03/2016
<p>13 the leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard the</p>	01/03/2016

<p>registered person must—</p> <p>1 (a) help young people aspire to fulfil their potential; In particular ensure that the movement of young people around the home is timely and does not delay their attendance to education.</p>	
<p>13 the leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must—</p> <p>1 (b) promote the welfare of young people; In particular ensure there is a prompt response to maintenance issues.</p>	01/03/2016
<p>20 Restraint and deprivation of liberty</p> <p>20 (1) (a) (c) Ensure restraint in relation to a child is only use for the purpose of preventing injury to any person (including the child); serious damage to the property of any person (including the child); or a child who is accommodated in a secure children’s home from absconding from the home.</p>	01/03/2016
<p>44 independent person: visits and reports</p> <p>(4) The independent person must produce a report about a visit (“the independent person’s report”) which sets out, in particular, the independent person’s opinion as to whether—</p> <p>4 (a) young people are effectively safeguarded</p> <p>4 (b) the conduct of the home promotes young people’s well-being</p>	01/03/2016

Recommendations

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

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs; In particular that staff receive training from people who are experts in their field, such as in the impact of young people taking 'legal highs' (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 53 paragraph 10.11)
- A record should be made and kept of all uses of single separation in line with The Children (Secure Accommodation) Regulations 1991; In particular, ensure the date and time of any occasion on which the young person is locked on his own in any room in the secure accommodation other than his bedroom during usual bedtime hours, the name of the person authorising this action, the reason for it and the date on which and time at which the child ceases to be locked in that room. This is with specific reference to 'Elected' and 'Directed' single separation (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 50, paragraph 9.65)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This secure children's home is operated by a local authority and is approved by the Secretary of State to restrict young people's liberty. Education is provided on site.

The children's home can accommodate up to 24 young people, who are aged up to 17 years. Up to 24 young people who have received a custodial sentence can be placed at this home by the Youth Justice Board. Other young people, subject of Section 25 of The Children Act 1989, can be placed by local authorities, with agreement from the Youth Justice Board. Admission of any young person under 13 years of age subject to Section 25 of The Children Act 1989 requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/08/2015	CH - Interim	Sustained Effectiveness
02/03/2015	CH - Full	Good
09/09/2014	CH - Full	Good
13/02/2008	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>Good</p>
<p>Young people receive good quality care that is well planned and delivered. Their day-to-day experience is positive because staff create a welcoming and nurturing environment. The home provides a structure that allows young people to regain control of their actions and behaviours. This enhances young people’s feelings of safety and security.</p> <p>Internal care planning systems emphasise and reflect young people’s individual needs. Their often complex behaviours are managed through personalised care planning processes. These combine group work sessions with bespoke one-to-one meetings supported by multi-disciplinary health and social care professionals. Young people make good progress in their development because intervention programmes take account of their individual circumstances, presenting risk factors, challenging behaviours and vulnerabilities. Young people are encouraged to reflect on their behaviours and take responsibility for their actions, considering the impact these have on others. One young person said, ‘I like the sessions and stuff. They make you think about what you do and if you could do it differently next time, or just not do it at all.’ This approach promotes young people’s self-esteem and confidence and encourages them to use alternative strategies to manage their anxieties and frustrations.</p> <p>Young people have generally positive relationships with staff. One young person said, ‘The staff are good because I think they understand what it’s like for us.’ Staff support young people to celebrate their differences and diversity. They promote tolerance and understanding through personalised one-to-one sessions, effective discussion and partnership working with other agencies. This ensure that young people receive tailored care that promotes their development.</p> <p>Staff are skilled in recognising antecedents to changes in young people’s behaviours. They use their positive relationships with young people to identify behaviour management strategies that keep them safe from harm and promote personal safety and responsibility. Other professionals praise such an approach. For example a social worker said, ‘I think the unit is able to respond quickly to young people’s needs because they continually review their risks. Things aren’t set in stone and I think the young people do well because of this flexibility.’</p> <p>Case management is robust and effective. Statutory information including secure accommodation reviews, sentencing plans and looked after child documentation are retained in case files. These are well maintained and updated following weekly</p>	

case management meetings. This means that case files effectively contribute to young people's understanding of their history and provide a comprehensive synopsis of their placement.

The home has newly commissioned health care arrangements. This partnership working between the social care team, mental health staff, nursing professionals, psychologists and psychiatrists is an emerging strength of the service. Health assessments considering young people's physical health, emotional well-being and required medical interventions, such as prescription treatment for addictions, commence on admission. This ensures that young people are able to access forensic and clinical interventions without delay. This promotes and supports their emotional resilience and progress.

Young people are listened to. They participate in regular group meetings and are able to express their opinions and raise any general concerns. The structure of these meetings and the attendance of senior managers mean that young people receive timely feedback. Senior managers seek feedback from young people regarding group work programmes, menu planning and activities with their findings influencing day-to-day routines. Young people say they feel 'listened to and heard' and are involved in decisions made about the home. This promotes their sense of safety and well-being.

In general young people benefit from an activity programme that offers a variety of opportunities. The programme provides regular sporting events including basketball and football. However, some young people feel they are not able to pursue all their personal hobbies and interests. One young person said, 'We play a lot of football here. I'd like to do some of the other stuff we only do in the holidays. I don't get why we can't do some activities more often.'

Resettlement is well planned and supported. Case managers and dedicated resettlement staff work in partnership with other agencies such as local authorities, youth offending services and specialist agencies. Transition planning commences on admission and is continually reviewed. Young people are able to access the 'life skills lodge' supporting them to develop independence skills. This approach increases the likelihood of young people settling into community living once released.

The nature of the service means that young people are often placed a considerable distance away from their families. Staff recognise the impact this has on young people's emotional development and levels of anxiety. They liaise with young people's families to support regular visits and telephone contact. Staff welcome families and endeavour to accommodate any special request. As a result, young people are able to maintain the relationships that are important to them and are not isolated from their families. Social workers say that feedback they have received from parents is positive, with one parent praising the home for 'giving them their child back.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Young people say they feel safe. Care practice is underpinned by effective policies and procedures, detailed risk assessments and staff responses. Staff practice prioritises the safe management of young people’s individual risks and vulnerabilities. They receive training in safeguarding and fully understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping young people safe. Young people confirm that they mostly feel safe but when they do not they can talk to staff who will listen and address their concerns.</p> <p>Concerns and complaints, no matter how minor, are seriously considered. These are managed in the best interest of young people’s safety and well-being. Young people confirmed they know how to complain and who to contact should they wish to seek independent support or guidance. A vast majority of complaints are for minor issues. All complaints are addressed appropriately and resolved in a timely manner.</p> <p>Robust actions ensure that when safeguarding concerns arise they are addressed swiftly and in keeping with agreed child protection protocols. This includes reporting matters to external safeguarding professionals who maintain good oversight with regards all aspects of safeguarding practice in the home. Investigations have been thorough and records confirm that managers have been transparent and robust in their responses. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) said, ‘I absolutely have no concerns. They are robust and caring in their response to keeping young people safe. They call me in or seek advice when necessary and I have never picked up concerns that were not reported.’</p> <p>Detailed risk assessments outline young people’s known risks and vulnerabilities from the point of admission. Staff continually monitor young people’s behaviour and implement good systems to share important information with the whole staff team. This ensures that any emerging concerns are taken fully into consideration and enables staff to adapt their practice to counteract concerns and provide appropriate supervision and support. These processes are embedded in practice and have proven highly effective in supporting young people who are at risk; for example, those who self-harm.</p> <p>It is important to the Registered Manager and the staff team that young people feel safe. For example, young people have been asked to identify any areas in which they may feel particularly vulnerable, or at risk of bullying. This serves as a useful tool for managing the environment and raising staff awareness of potential areas of concern. There is a recognition that this needs to be implemented more</p>	

frequently than it is currently to enable managers to assess how young people's feelings of safety change during their stay at the home.

Staff implement a range of intervention programmes which are delivered through individual key-work sessions and themed group work. These enable young people to explore their offending and risk taking behaviour as well as a range of relevant topics such as child sexual exploitation, gangs, substance misuse, social media, e-safety and bullying. This helps young people to better understand the challenges and risks they face in their lives and helps them to make better choices about keeping themselves safe and out of trouble.

There have been no incidents of young people absconding since the last inspection. The home has effective security regimes that staff follow to ensure the integrity of the secure environment. The home has good links with the local police and there are clear protocols in place in the event that a young person should abscond; for example, when out on an authorised visit or activity in the community.

Young people understand the rules and for the most part feel they are fair. The majority of young people spoke positively about the homes' reward system and recognise the benefit of moving up to the higher levels for increased privileges. Negative behaviour is challenged proportionately. There has been a notable change in culture since the last inspection with an increased emphasis on individual rather than regime-led responses to negative behaviour. This has resulted in a good balance between the use of sanctions and a restorative approach which enables young people to reflect and find better ways of maintaining socially acceptable behaviour. Such an approach improves the chances of successful transitions back to the community.

The use of restraint is appropriate and in line with regulation, with one exception. All staff are trained in behaviour management and the use of physical intervention before they work directly with young people. Given the challenging nature of some young people, incidents of physical intervention are low. In one incident reviewed by inspectors the criteria for physical restraint was not met. In this instance staff intervened in a preventative manner to stop a young person's known behaviour from escalating. A low-level restraint was used which successfully calmed the situation, though learning for staff was identified. It was recognised by managers that the criteria was not met and that staff require further guidance. The impact of this matter is limited due to the low-level intervention used and managers having recognised action needed to ensure staff fully understand the home's policy and the regulations. Managers and the LADO scrutinise incidents routinely. All are audited using closed-circuit television (CCTV) on a monthly basis. This assists managers and the homes restraint trainers to ensure practice remains appropriate and safe, while also identifying areas of learning. In one other physical restraint incident, a young person suffered an injury. The matter was thoroughly and robustly investigated both by external agencies and professionals, and then by the

Registered Manager with a senior manager in the local authority. Findings indicated this was an accident, though learning points for staff about ways situations could have been differently managed were identified and have been taken forward.

The use of single separation is appropriate. There is a clear focus on helping young people regain control and return to the group as quickly as possible. Detailed records of enforced separations are maintained and monitored. However, the home does not maintain a record of directed or elected single separation; although the young people's activities records do provide some insight into when young people are choosing to spend time in their room. This is a missed opportunity for the leadership team to fully identify patterns and trends around contributory factors which result in young people spending time on their own.

The searching of young people and their rooms is proportionate. Young people say they are not subjected to unnecessary searches. The use of searching is risk led and undertaken at a level which matches the level of concern. Records are maintained and evidence that searches are of a non-intrusive manner and relevant to the level of presenting risk. On a few occasions contraband, mainly tobacco and other smoking materials, have been discovered. The home do not have a wide spread problem with contraband.

Staff recruitment supports the safety of young people. Checks are completed prior to staff starting at the home are robust. This ensures only those adults deemed appropriate care for young people.

The health and safety of young people and staff alike is taken seriously. A range of health and safety procedures, risk assessments and routine checks ensure the environment is safe. Fire safety is robustly implemented with a range of agreed protocols in place to facilitate the safe and secure evacuation of part or all of the home.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
<p>The management of the home is effective with a clear emphasis placed on meeting the individual needs of young people. The leadership team are strong at managing the operational aspects of the home and lead by example in setting appropriately high standards of practice. However, shortfalls found at the inspection highlight a need to improve strategic planning and oversight.</p> <p>Feedback from stakeholders, including social workers and youth offending service</p>	

staff is very positive. Comments such as, 'The home focus on providing individual care...communication is excellent...(name of young person) has made significant progress at the home', were indicative of the responses received. The Youth Justice Board confirmed the home are meeting the requirements of accommodating young people subject to criminal sentences and periods of remand.

The Registered Manager is a qualified social worker who also holds a relevant degree and the level 4 award in care and management. She is currently undertaking a Master's degree in leadership and management. The Registered Manager has been post five months after succeeding the long standing manager of the home. She has worked at the home for over five years and was the previous head of care. Her approach encourages transparency and creativity with staff and managers praising the impact this has had in improving their levels of confidence and motivation. To this end she acknowledged shortfalls and began taking immediate action to remedy them. She is passionate about her role and is striving to consolidate good practice, learn from experience and improve the home further.

The home has had a head of care vacancy since the Registered Manager took up her role last summer. A recent recruitment drive was unsuccessful in filling the post. Such a gap within the senior leadership team has meant managers having to take on additional responsibilities and working to their utmost capacity to lessen any impact. The search to recruit a head of care is on-going.

The two recommendations made at the last full inspection have been addressed. These related to education and vocational/careers support and are commented on in the 'outcomes in education and related learning activities' section.

The Registered Manager is acutely aware of the strengths of the home and the areas that need to improve. Her monitoring reports are detailed and take account of how well the home is functioning and the progress made by young people. This enables her to highlight patterns and trends in the behaviour of young people and the practice of adults who care for them. External independent monitoring takes place monthly. Whilst providing a reasonable overview of events including capturing the views of young people, the current process does not utilise data to its fullest extent. For instance, although recording the number and type of restraints the report does not provide a conclusive assessment of how well the home effectively safeguards young people. This results in lost opportunities to provide a deeper critique of the home.

Young people live in a home that helps to keep them safe and secure. However routine maintenance procedures are inconsistently applied. Improvements to the quality of CCTV coverage and upgrades to a number of locks and doors has ensured the home environment remains robust. The décor of the home is appropriate with young people able to personalise their rooms with pictures and posters within reason, and in line with any risk assessment. In most aspects a

process of regular health and safety checks ensures the completion of repairs as and when necessary. However several issues were found, such as a missing cover that meant wires were exposed on a ceiling in the gym. Although the wires are not live and presented not risk to health or wellbeing, and young people would only be in the gym under supervision, this did not fully promote safety or enhance the look of the home. The shortfalls were immediately rectified.

Staff receive clear guidance and encouragement to meet the needs of young people to a high standard. They receive appropriate training and regular supervision. Recent training has included supporting young people who identify as transgender and the risks of radicalisation. However the use expert trainers has reduced since last year. This means opportunities for staff to gain direct advice and guidance from practitioners in the field is limited. For example, staff have not received specific external training in substance misuse that focuses on contemporary concerns such as, 'legal highs' and their impact on young people. Staff say they receive extremely good support which culminates in raising expectations of practice and improving consistency. As a result young people are looked after by adults who are motivated and passionate about supporting them to learn and progress in all areas of their lives.

Suitable care staff numbers ensure young people are looked after appropriately night and day, although a shortage of education staff has meant care staff having to provide classroom support. During the inspection the movement of young people when going to education as sometimes slow and/or delayed. This was in part due to the high number of young people who could not mix with each other, though such delays detracted from an otherwise good level of structure and routine.

The stable and experienced care staff team provide a good balance between imposing consistent boundaries, encouraging participation and delivering nurture and emotional warmth. Young people spoke most positively about staff, notably the support and guidance they receive. This they say has helped them make progress in their lives.

Outcomes in education and related learning activities	Good
<p>Education outcomes continue to be good for the majority of young people. Young people, in particular those staying longer periods, make significant gains in literacy and numeracy. Those staying shorter periods achieve an average of three short qualifications, which is good considering their prior attainment. However, data is not sufficiently analysed to evaluate whether this constitutes good enough progress for each individual young person. There are no meaningful differences in</p>	

the progress and achievement of other groups such as boys or younger people make with their education.

Initial assessment of education needs is thorough and prompt. Managers use the results of initial assessment to set young people challenging targets, which they review and update frequently. The way managers, teachers and care staff promote inclusion to education is very good. Young people are particularly well supported into education when they arrive at the home by spending the first two weeks in the Inclusion classroom where their attitude and readiness to learn is managed well by education and care staff. Young people's behaviours begin to improve quickly and many enjoy participating in education and learning activities.

Positive and successful actions have been taken to ensure that any young person with particularly difficult barriers to learning receive individual, tailored tuition in order to continue receiving education. The amount of additional learning support available to young people has been increased following a recommendation made at the previous inspection.

Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Teachers display a flexible approach to the lesson planning, often designing high quality learning resources to meet the varied needs. Teachers and instructors are very experienced at managing the highly challenging behaviours and attitudes to learning that the young people present and they generally succeed in supporting them to remain engaged in activities. Teachers are skilful at adapting lessons swiftly in order to maintain the pace of learning. Attendance to learning activities is good although during the inspection, some poor punctuality was observed.

Teachers provide good verbal feedback to young people on an ongoing basis, reassuring them of the good progress they are making. The quality of written feedback is mostly good and teachers correct spelling mistakes, thus setting high standards for the young people.

Young people in the home build respectful relationships with their tutors who place an extremely good emphasis on safeguarding them. For example, the science tutor manages risk well when undertaking practical work involving flames and gas with the young people. In the motor vehicle workshop, instructors pay special attention to health and safety ensuring all young people adhere to the agreed safe working practices.

Young people have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. The core subjects such as English, mathematics, science and Physical Education are prioritised well. Other subjects such as Art, printing design and music technology are also part of the curriculum. Staff shortages in the last three months have meant that no Information Technology has been delivered; however, leaders and managers have been prompt in addressing this and the new tutor is due to start imminently. Other teachers' short absences are not always covered by teaching staff and in these

very few cases, good efforts are made by care staff to ensure that young people remain engaged in activities that develop their social and personal skills. Care staff follow tasks related to the curriculum subject covered, but not enough formal learning takes place in some of these sessions.

In addition, young people benefit from good enrichment and leisure activities that support them well to develop their personal and social skills. They regularly work in groups through many of their enrichment activities developing teamwork and tolerance towards each other. Young people have the opportunity to undertake horticulture and gardening and animal and pet care. This provides them with a wide range of opportunities to work and learn outdoors in a calming and therapeutic environment. The range of sports young people have access to is good, with many of them participating well. Football, tennis, basketball and circuit training are just a few. The gym provides young people good cardiovascular exercise facilities and an appropriate weights area which can be used under supervision.

Young people receive good careers advice. They are supported to find information about traineeship and apprenticeship programmes in the geographical area they will move to after leaving, as well as obtaining information on further education courses. The resettlement workers offer young people similarly effective support as they help young people to prepare for their transition back into the community. Staff maintain contact with the leavers to ensure they have settled well back in the community. Since the last inspection the number of links with external employers has been significantly increased and as a consequence, a few young people have taken part in work experience placements. Staff and managers have been imaginative and rented an allotment in the locality to procure a work environment for one of the young people residing in the home.

The operational management of education is good, demonstrating good capacity to improve by sustaining good outcomes for learners and addressing the two recommendations made at the previous inspection. Managers monitor well the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that it remains good. Leaders and managers are aware of the need to address the impact staff shortages have in education although this is not reflected in their improvement plan. Therefore, there is a need to focus on planning a strategy to develop and improve the education provision further, securing the continuity of education delivery throughout the year.

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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