

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	13/04/2016
Unique reference number	1183069
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Joanne Martin
Inspector	Clive Lucas

Inspection date	13/04/2016
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
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	Good

1183069

Summary of findings

■ The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people make good progress from their starting points.
- Young people build good and trusting relationships with staff. They enjoy spending time with staff and staff take an interest in young people's daily lives.
- Managers and staff know young people well so they can provide effective, individualised care to help meet their needs.
- Staff listen and respond to young people's views. They pick up on young people's non-verbal communication so that those who speak less are not isolated.
- Staff identify and meet young people's health needs. This includes specialist needs, such as emotional and mental health as well as routine needs such as dental and optical.
- Staff respond to young people's individual and changing education needs.
- Work with young people, including one-to-one sessions, is effective and valued by young people.
- The home provides a physically safe environment and helps young people to reduce their risk taking behaviours.
- Young people feel safe because of the work that staff do. Staff help young people to develop coping strategies and to learn how to keep themselves safer.
- There is good management of the home, residential staff and nurses work well together.
- There is a focus on training and continued professional development. Not all staff have obtained their Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare, but there is a clear plan to achieve this in the near future.
- There are very effective relationships with other agencies.
- Staff promote young people's safety, but this is limited to a degree by incomplete employment checks.

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 ensure that full and satisfactory recruitment information is available in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. This relates to having full employment histories and appropriate references. (Regulation 32(3)(d))	30/06/2016
The registered person must ensure that staff have the appropriate qualifications for the work that the individual is to perform. (Regulation 32(3)(b))	31/08/2016

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is registered for up to five children who have mental disorders. It is privately owned and is also registered with the Care Quality Commission.

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>This home has been open for six months. Some young people have lived at the home since it opened and others have moved in much more recently. Young people are building good and trusting relationships with staff, including the residential care workers and the nurses.</p> <p>Managers and staff know the young people well; they take an interest in their daily lives. For example, there are discussions over meal times about the highs and lows of the young people's days. This helps young people to develop a sense of worth and belonging. During a meal in the garden one young person said: 'I love days like this when you can sit outside, eat and chill like with a family.' These are quality experiences that young people can take part in and will form part of their childhood memories.</p> <p>Staff knowledge of young people allows them to provide effective individualised care. Staff listen to young people's views and, where possible, respond positively to them. One young person asked for a different meal than previously agreed and was being cooked. The member of staff, who did not have time to cook a separate meal, involved the young person in the cooking so that they could have their choice. This helped the young person to understand about negotiation and to develop some self-care skills. Young people's views about their futures are listened to and influence their plans. Sometimes what they want is not possible and staff help them to understand why. Some young people are less vocal than others; staff pick up on their non-verbal communication so that they can be included in conversations. Young people know how to complain and some of them have advocates.</p> <p>Staff provide a very good level of care for young people. They help them to prepare for their moves into the home and to make those moves as positive as they can, even when they happen with very little notice. One external professional spoke of how a young person was initially unhappy at having to move from her previous placement, but settled into the home quickly and has good relationships with staff. Staff address young people's health needs well. The ethos of the home, as set out in the statement of purpose, is that young people are admitted from the local area and so can maintain links with existing services including health services. This includes their general practitioners and specialist mental health services. However, some young people have come with an unknown history of dental and optical care. Staff make appointments and support young people to access these services. For some, this makes a significant difference and addresses health needs</p>	

that were previously unmet. The home has mental health nurses working alongside care staff and has regular input from local children and adolescent mental health services. This helps to provide comprehensive care to meet young people's needs well. Young people have made notable progress in their emotional and mental health while at the home.

There have been times when some young people have been diagnosed as unable to access mainstream education, due to their primary emotional and mental health needs. Where this is the case, multi-agency decisions, including health, are taken in the young people's best interests. This is an area where the plans for young people to remain in their existing local services have not worked as planned. However, the organisation has recognised the need to review this. They have made arrangements for a qualified teacher and learning assistant from a nearby education setting to spend five mornings a week at the home to help young people with their education. This has started very recently and young people are excited about it. Some young people do remain in, or return to, their existing education settings. Staff support them in this and form effective relationships with the schools to ensure that the young people's educational needs are met. There is a clear focus on education to make sure that young people are able to benefit from it at a level that their emotional needs allow. When young people are not in education, there are plans for them to return. An independent reviewing officer described the education arrangements as 'quite a dedicated service'. The virtual school head said that medical opinions inform decisions about young people's ability to access education and that staff respond to young people's changing educational needs. Staff work very effectively with young people to help them make progress. Young people say that the one to one sessions they have help them. One described them as comforting and relaxing.

Young people enjoy spending time with staff, going for walks, doing craft work and other activities. They are looking forward to an indoor camping sleepover, planned as part of the celebration of Shakespeare's birthday, when they will watch 'Gnomeo and Juliet'.

To date no young people have moved on from the home. Staff encourage young people to develop skills for their future independence. Young people help with cooking and looking after the home. One said they had not used a vacuum before coming to the home. Some young people are supported to learn to manage their mobile phone credit and to engage in part time work. Due to the nature of the young people's needs, they are unlikely to go from this home to independence. However, the foundation skills for successful independent living are encouraged.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Young people live in a safe environment with support to reduce their risk taking behaviours. The design of the home reduces the risk of ligature use and self-harm. A placing authority representative said that the work staff have done to make the home safe is a credit to the organisation. One young person said that staff keep them safe and this makes them feel safe. They feel they are in a very much better place than they would have been if they had not moved to the home.</p> <p>Young people do present with risk taking behaviours. They have backgrounds of self-harm and suicide ideation and attempts. While some self-harm has continued, the views of placing social workers and independent reviewing officers are that the frequency of this has decreased. They comment on the home being a safe and appropriate environment for the young people. They also say that staff work with young people to help them develop better coping strategies and that young people are making good progress. They all feel that the young people are placed appropriately.</p> <p>There are risk assessments for young people and activities. The recording format for these is in the process of changing to make them more effective. Staff have a good knowledge of the risks that young people are vulnerable to and the way they have to work to reduce these risks. This all helps to keep young people safe.</p> <p>When possible, there are detailed preparations for young people to move into the home. This allows for planning and assessment of risks so that staff can help to keep young people safe as soon as they move in. There are discussions with young people through house meetings and individual sessions, which cover issues such as radicalisation, exploitation and internet safety. The local police officer has visited the home to talk to young people about keeping themselves safe, including when using social media. This all helps to provide young people with information that they can use to learn how to protect themselves.</p> <p>Staff have access to guidance on what to do when young people are missing from care. This includes the protocol agreed with the local police. There have not been any incidents of young people being missing from care, but there are two recorded incidents of young people being absent from the home. In one incident the young person returned with member of staff, having only gone to the end of the drive. The other one involved a young person returning to their parent. The staff responded appropriately to this, calling the police and welcoming her back, focusing on their concern for her safety and making her feel cared for not punished. Both of these incidents were shortly after the home opened and there have not been any since. High levels of supervision, the relationships between young people and staff and the engagement of young people in the running of the home all reduce the likelihood that young people will go missing from care.</p>	

Staff have clear expectations of young people’s behaviour and put effective boundaries in place. One social worker said that firm and clear boundaries are in place, which staff discussed with the social worker and the young person. Staff also work with parents to set boundaries. There have not been any sanctions used at the home since it opened. Staff acknowledge and reinforce positive behaviour and achievements through praise and rewards. Despite the clear boundaries staff are prepared to be flexible when they can and where it is in young people’s best interests, but they do not shy away from addressing issues with young people. There is a calm atmosphere in the home, which was positively commented upon by an external professional. Clear, appropriate boundaries help young people to feel safe and contained while living at the home.

There are safe recruitment processes for staff, which for the most part are comprehensive, but some elements have been missed including obtaining a full employment history and a reference from a previous employer. Overall, a great deal is done to help young people and to promote their safety while they live at the home and in their future lives, but the lack of a fully comprehensive system for checking potential staff suitability does limit this to a degree.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>The registered manager has worked at the home since it opened six months ago and she is appropriately qualified and experienced for her role. Staff appreciate the leadership and support she provides.</p> <p>The home has sufficient staff to provide a suitable level of supervision for the young people. This includes mental health nurses and residential staff. Nurses are on shift with residential staff and the two are able to inform each other’s practice. Nurses receive appropriate professional supervision as well as supervision from the registered manager. Care staff receive regular supervision. They have appraisals, which set clear targets for their development. The work of managers and staff helps young people to make good progress while they are at the home. A health professional said that a significant outcome for the four young people at the home is that they have been kept out of, or prevented from returning to the mental health hospital system. There is effective monitoring of this progress through a combination of care and health recording systems. This information informs social workers so that young people’s plans are relevant. Young people are seen as important and at the core of the work in the home.</p> <p>Managers understand the home’s strengths and areas for development. As a new home, processes and practices have had to be tried and measured. Managers have</p>	

identified areas that have not been working as effectively as hoped, such as education, and reviewed them to improve outcomes for young people. This helps managers and staff to operate in a way that fulfils the aims and objectives of the statement of purpose.

There are very good relationships between managers, staff and other agencies. This includes the police, health services, education services and the placing authority. All of these agencies speak highly of the quality of their relationships with the home. Some spoke of being impressed by the quality and enthusiasm of care staff. All commented on the effective communication they had with the home and one spoke about how well staff communicate with young people's families. One example given was the quality of reports prepared for young people's Looked After Children reviews and the knowledge of the staff who attended the review. These positive relationships coupled with good communication lead to more consistent and effective work with young people to meet their needs better and ensure their plans are in their best interests.

Staff have training in the areas they need in order to help them provide good care for young people. Importantly for a home where there is such potential for self-harm, all staff are trained in first aid. There is a focus on staff's continual professional development. However, three care staff have not yet achieved the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare. They are all in the process of undertaking the qualification and have predicted end dates of August 2016. One member of staff is just completing her assessor's training so that in future there is a more robust system to ensure that staff working in the home complete their training within the given timescales. Due to the training provided, the focus on professional development and the imminent expected completion date for the remaining staff, the impact on young people is limited.

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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