

## Children's homes inspection – Full

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>1 June 2016</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>SC431807</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered provider</b>	<b>SWAAY Child and Adolescent Services Limited</b>
<b>Registered provider address</b>	<b>c/o 591 London Road, Sutton, Surrey SM3 9AG</b>

<b>Responsible individual</b>	<b>Gerard Berry</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Andrew Roberts</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Chris Peel</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>1 June 2016</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>Improved effectiveness</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>

**SC431807**

## **Summary of findings**

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

- There is a commitment to improve the quality of the lives of young people by the manager, the staff and the wider organisation. This is through changes to the physical environment, to working practice and researching evidence-based approaches to their work. Young people are consulted as far as possible, and contribute their views, on the changes to be made.
- A lot of work has been undertaken in recent months to create a more homely environment for the young people. All of the young people, all of the staff spoken to and many professionals and family members remarked on the high standard of the decor and welcoming atmosphere of the home.
- There is a strong theoretical basis to the work being undertaken in the home, with the manager and staff embracing recent training in 'working attachment' and linking this to the 'Good Lives Model' used to underpin work addressing offending behaviour. Staff were able to provide examples of how their practice has changed as a result of the training and of the impact that they believe this has made.
- Young people are making progress in many areas of their lives, including in those of emotional intelligence that PACE and the attachment work is designed to address. This is illustrated by the comment of one professional who said that she was 'absolutely stunned' by the demonstration by a young person that he was 'understanding emotions for the first time and able to show empathy'.
- A striking illustration of development of young people living in the home is how they have been giving advice and support to peers or younger children using the reasoning and language that staff use with them. This has included discussions about drug misuse, reflecting on behaviour and making efforts in education. This demonstrates how positive messages have been 'internalised', accepted as ways of making good choices and will help to guide young people once they have left the home.

## 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 recommendations:

- Rooms should only be searched if the child has been informed or asked for their permission, or if there are grounds for believing that there is a risk to the child's or another person's safety or well-being. Such searches should be recorded in a format designed for this specific purpose ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.20).
- The registered person should work with the placing authority to help each child to prepare for leaving both practically and emotionally. This preparation should be recorded in case files ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 57, paragraph 11.9).
- Children should be encouraged by staff to see the home's records as 'living documents' supporting them to view and contribute to the record in a way that reflects their voice on a regular basis ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.19).
- The registered person should establish whether units completed in a candidate's original qualification have content which corresponds with the units of the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare and/or the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare and, where gaps are identified, act to ensure relevant units or qualifications are completed ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 68, Annex A, paragraph 1.2 and 4).

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

The service accommodates up to four boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The home is owned and operated by a private organisation that specialises in the assessment and treatment of male adolescents, using Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy (known as PACE) principles, the 'Good Lives Model' and attachment theory.

The organisation also provides educational and therapeutic training.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
4 January 2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
3 June 2015	Full	Requires improvement
5 February 2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
3 June 2014	Full	Adequate

## 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>The home has been going through a process of refurbishment, with several rooms having been redecorated and furniture replaced. Young people have made a contribution to these improvements by making repairs, painting or helping to clear the garden, further enhancing their sense of pride in their home. One young person described it as 'amazing'. Another young person spoke in terms of 'we are [as opposed to 'they are'] decorating the spare room... '.</p> <p>The investment in 'working attachment' training for the whole team has invigorated the staff's method of interacting with young people. Many examples were given, including paying attention to the connotations of words. For one young person, being told 'you need to have a meeting with the manager' equals 'you are in trouble' and substituting 'have a chat' means that he does not get unnecessarily defensive. By addressing emotions the staff are able to help young people to focus on the issues and progress.</p> <p>Professionals commented on young people expressing themselves better, gaining confidence and higher self-esteem. One professional spoke of how a young person is 'able to talk to you now, reflecting on certain actions. He is more able to regulate his behaviour and so is settled at college and pulls away from the wrong crowd. Staff have helped his social skills.'</p> <p>Having had a rule of no physical contact for some years, the provider has introduced 'appropriate touch' between staff and young people (for example, to comfort). The view of young people is that this is an improvement, but staff feel it is awkward to ask permission of someone every time. The policy is under review by young people, staff and managers.</p> <p>Education is strongly promoted, with homework and revision actively supported. Staff encourage young people to attend school or college and assistance is given there to help young people maintain focus and deal with frustrations that might otherwise get out of hand. A professional commented that the provider is 'very good at working with young people who don't fit the usual approaches' in education. All young people have a 100% attendance record and one young person continues to go and to maintain his work experience placement even though he has completed all of the requirements.</p> <p>Young people have ample opportunity to voice their opinions, including the ability to call a house meeting if they think that an issue needs to be addressed by everyone. A wishes and feelings box has been introduced and staff consider suggestions at their fortnightly meetings. Advocates are sought for young people when they have concerns about decisions being made. A recent example is in</p>	

regard to the possibility of a local authority moving a young person who wants to remain placed here until an adult. He says that he regards this as his home.

Sanctions are regarded as fair by young people, but there is a greater emphasis on rewarding positive behaviour.

Cultural evenings widen the view that young people have of the world. In addition to tasting food from different cultures, young people gain insights as to how others live. For example, one young person was struck by the fact that he is already older than the mean age of the population of Uganda.

Young people have a choice of food, contributing ideas for the menu and cooking for the rest of the group. Healthy options are promoted by staff and one young person told me that he had cut down his portion size and was doing more exercise as a result.

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>One member of staff remarked that the current registered manager has a consistent approach to maintaining boundaries for young people. This gives a secure base from which to work. Stability of those employed at the home over the last several months has increased the sense of cohesion, better working relationships and development of common aims to create an environment in which young people can thrive.</p> <p>An ethos of open communication, including the acknowledgement of mistakes and constructive challenging, has been developed between staff and between staff and young people. This allows young people to see that it is possible to 'mess up', as the manager put it, and not be rejected. Learning can then take place.</p> <p>The team have been challenged by the violent behaviour of one young person who could not be contained within the home. Despite this, he was afforded 'a good ending' with an excellent transition planned and executed. Records demonstrate that the young person's best interests were upheld, including postponing the day of the move so that he could participate in a much anticipated event. Nevertheless, there is nothing written about how he was emotionally prepared for the transition. This also applies to records of the impending move of another young person, even though staff could tell the inspector of the emotional impact that it was likely to have.</p> <p>The 'policy of openness and equal communication' (quoting the statement of purpose) keeps both young people and staff safe. It extends to discussion of potentially difficult issues such as the flirtatious behaviour of a young person towards a staff member. This was raised at a handover meeting observed during the inspection, so ensuring that staff were aware of the issue and that the matter</p>	

could be addressed without discomfort.

The issue of professional boundaries is addressed in the induction programme, and although that term was not familiar to the staff that the inspector spoke to they were able to give examples of what would breach expectable standards. Staff were aware of the organisation's whistleblowing policy and who they would approach if they had concerns about unacceptable practice. A professional commented that 'staff had followed the right procedures' when a safeguarding issue had arisen, and young people are confident that if they raised concerns 'there would be [a] really big meeting about it' and their views sought.

Staff were seen to respect privacy, in terms of what information was shared and observing the protocol of only entering bedrooms after knocking and being invited in or after a count to three. This gives young people confidence that personal issues will be dealt with confidentially. All young people said that they had good relationships with staff and could trust them with any issues that they had.

The forging of relationships in which attachment is fostered is a strong component of the therapeutic approach of the home. Therefore, the key worker of one young person who transferred from another home in the organisation joined the staff team in order to maintain the relationship. One professional remarked on the successful matching of a young person to his key worker, seeing their shared enjoyment of cycle rides and projects around the house as instrumental in the progress she observed.

Contact with family is promoted and a father commented that staff were 'doing everything they can to help' his son to deal with a serious illness in the family, including facilitating his visits to the family when they could not travel to see him. In this was young people maintain good relationships with those important to them.

A new sanctions policy and recording format evidences that regulatory requirements are met. Reports of incidents and team meeting minutes show that they are reflected on to ensure that staff responses are appropriate and to identify if any change of assessment or approach is warranted. Currently, sanctions imposed by the manager are appraised by his deputy, which may not be as exacting as would be given by someone in a more senior position.

Links are made with the local safeguarding children's board through the head of care who shares relevant issues with home managers. Training around child sexual exploitation and 'protect' has been booked for all staff.

Records show that safer recruitment policies are followed when selecting staff new to the organisation.

The monitoring of the day-to-day running of the home has benefited from the development of rigorous systems, for example charts to record fridge and freezer temperatures. Not one entry has been missed since their introduction.



	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>The manager has established positive relationships with other professionals, particularly when it comes to managing risk in the community. The majority of social workers, youth offending workers and other professionals expressed very positive views of communication by staff and of collaboration to assess and meet the needs of young people. An occasional oversight in ensuring that appointments were kept has been rectified by ensuring that all appointments are now entered into the home's diary.</p> <p>A large majority of family and professionals are confident in the provider's ability to address offending behaviour and managing risks, although there is apprehension about how well this can continue once young people turn 18 years old and eventually leave the home. The manager and staff manage the inevitable tension well between allowing greater freedom and independence before young people reach that stage and the need to provide sufficient supervision to ensure safety. This is achieved by internal assessment involving each young person and consultation with the wider network.</p> <p>Case files are in a far better state than at the last full inspection, although some are better than others. There needs to be more consistency over the use of up-to-date formats as some key worker sessions are recorded on an old layout, meaning that young people's own agenda items are not recorded as clearly. Those sessions are now held regularly, though, and are being recorded.</p> <p>Consents are haphazardly filed in different sections making it hard to find what has been agreed by young people and those with parental responsibility. The independent person conducting Regulation 44 reviews comments in reports on the contents of case files. There is a regulatory responsibility not to view these files without the consent of the young person and the placing authority, but no record of this was found. The provider is aware of the issue of consents not consistently being sought and is taking steps to address this.</p> <p>Documentation is of a high quality, though. Recently introduced emotional behavioural response plans (replacing behaviour management plans) are designed to inform the 'working attachment' approach. They outline various levels of arousal and consequent behaviours that young people may demonstrate together with the kinds of tailored responses that could be used to help to reduce it. Application of these tools has assisted young people to avoid behaviours escalating as their emotional needs are often better met.</p> <p>Placement plans are thorough documents with scoring and charts that show the progress being made against specific goals and developmental areas from the time of admission. They are used as tools to inform the work being done, with frequent handwritten comments to note developments. Young people are involved in reviewing these plans by giving their own scores for how they are doing. They</p>	

each have their own 'child-friendly' version in which they can write their views. These are in an attractive format, but much of those read were blank with some sections never completed. Most young people said that they only looked at them before they were reviewed and could not recall what was in them. Alternative ways of engaging young people in their plans should be found that do not rely as much on written contributions.

Supervision and appraisals are now at or nearing the frequency set out in the statement of purpose and records of training demonstrate what each member of the team has undertaken. However, a high proportion of staff required to have completed the level 3 diploma for Residential Childcare by 1 April 2016 have not done so. The provider is aware of the shortfall and has plans in place to ensure that individual members of staff finish by a set time. The manager had not appreciated the need to establish that qualifications already held meet the requirements of Qualifications and Credit Framework levels and so had not compared the content of each to ensure that it does.

A workforce plan is not in place, although the elements are available in various policies and procedures.

The home's location risk assessment and development plans are both in good order, with the latter clearly showing the amount that has been achieved by the manager and staff in a relatively short space of time.

## 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 that 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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