

## Children's homes inspection – Full

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>25/07/2016</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>SC384018</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered provider</b>	<b>Surecare Residential Limited</b>
<b>Registered provider address</b>	<b>Mey House, Bridport Road, Poundbury, Dorset DT1 3QY</b>

<b>Responsible individual</b>	<b>Emma Barr</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Post vacant</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Rosie Davie</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>26/07/2016</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>Sustained 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>Requires improvement</b>

**SC384018**

## **Summary of findings**

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

- Children accept help and, as a result, overall they make progress.
- The majority of children can pinpoint why living in this home helps them.
- Children feel well looked after and like the staff.
- Staff spend a lot of time talking to the children, giving advice and support, and encouraging them to take appropriate responsibility for their placement plans.
- Children are encouraged to, and do, make decisions about the running of the home.
- Staff persevere to encourage children to attend formal education. As a result, they become more mindful of their futures.
- Staff work well with other agencies. They keep them informed and up to date and welcome a partnership approach.
- Some children accept direct therapeutic support. Others are aware that this is a resource available to help them when they are ready.
- The frequency of incidents in the home is reducing.
- Although children go missing, the length of time is reducing and they are more inclined to keep in touch with staff. This is a significant improvement from their starting points.
- Parents say that they feel welcome and kept informed of their child's progress.
- This inspection identified some shortfalls, some of which have no direct impact on children. The shortfalls are: in relation to record keeping; an efficient system for ensuring return to home interviews for all children is not in place; one member of the team has not yet completed the required qualification; on some occasions, staff do not act quickly to de-escalate conflict; more is required for those children waiting to re-engage with school; some sanctions lack creativity and the upper and lower hallways are in need of refreshing.

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

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the registered persons 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 persons must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>11: The positive relationships standard</p> <p>In order to meet the positive relationships standard, with specific reference to the impact on other children of incidents in the home, the registered person must ensure that staff</p> <p>(2)(xi) de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children.</p>	30/09/2016
The registered person must implement the missing child policy setting out the procedures to be followed, and the roles and responsibilities of persons working at the home in relation to a child who is or has been, absent without permission. (Regulation 34(4)(b))	30/09/2016
The registered person must ensure that each individual who works in the home in a care role has by the relevant date attained the level 3 diploma for residential childcare (England) ('the level 3 diploma'); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the level 3 diploma. (Regulation 32(4)(a)(b))	30/09/2016
The registered person must maintain records for each child which are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36(1)(b)(c))	30/09/2016
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46(1)(2))	30/09/2016

## Recommendations

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

- Ensure that staff put into practice the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information, with specific reference to amending the recording of any self-harm from accident to incident. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- Ensure that when children placed in a home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, they are consistently supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and are engaged in suitable structured activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- Ensure that there is a consistent approach to maintaining the home as a nurturing, homely domestic environment with specific reference to the painting of the lower and upper hallways. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Ensure that sanctions used to address poor behaviour are consistently restorative in nature and help children to recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

This home is one of a small group run by a private provider. Registration is for up to four children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The provider operates a school nearby which children may attend.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
09/06/2015	Full	Good
05/02/2015	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
19/11/2014	Full	Good

## 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>More than one child said: 'This is a good home.' One child said: 'This is the best home that I have been in by far. I like the way that the staff are teaching me about trust. Sometimes I wonder if things would have been different for me if I had come here sooner. I missed out on a lot of education before coming here and now I am getting back on track and I am getting ready to build a better future for myself.'</p> <p>Children who have difficulty sustaining education re-engage and begin to make progress in subjects such as maths, English and design. The home works well with other agencies, such as the virtual headteacher and placing local authority social workers, to promote and advocate for children's return to education. However, for those children who have moved area and are awaiting their return to an official education structure, the routines and systems in the home to stimulate and support learning fall short. This is because the approach is inconsistent. While some staff take children to the library, horse riding or encourage them to write, more frequently children are asked to occupy themselves or to tidy their bedrooms, thus reducing the opportunities for encouraging reluctant children to reach their potential.</p> <p>Families and those who are significant to children are welcome when they come to visit. Staff support and facilitate contact as defined by local authority care plans. They advocate for the children and provide regular feedback about the emotional impact of arrangements, helping the placing social workers to make adjustments to plans. This helps children to feel valued and listened to. One parent said: 'The staff get in touch with me a lot and keep me up to date. I think that the home is well run. Each member of staff I have met is friendly.'</p> <p>All children have the offer of direct therapeutic support from the therapist working for the provider. Most children take up the offer. Others consider it and are aware that they can come back to this individualised help when they are ready. Children say that they benefit from the emotional and psychological support they receive. One child said: 'I have learned new ways to deal with my anger that work for me.' This demonstrates that children recognise that they are progressing and the result is that, for those children, the severity and frequency of incidents reduce. However, the arrangements for recording information in relation to self-harm fall short. This is because examples sampled show that some staff use an accident form to capture some of the information. This shortfall does not help managers and leaders to recognise patterns and trends in this behaviour. However, this has no present impact for any current child because the key staff are responsive and</p>	

manage situations well, liaising with agencies as situations arise.

The home provides ample space for children to relax. Bedrooms are personalised to a high standard. One child has pet fish and said: 'I love my room.' When children cause damage around the home, the majority of repairs are attended to quickly, and the frequency of incidents resulting in damage to property is reducing. Through routine discussion at mealtimes and house meetings, the children are encouraged to talk about their day, to take pride in their environment and to contribute to sustaining a welcoming and homely ambience. One member of staff said: 'I think that we are preparing these children for when they go out into the big, wide world.' This approach has a positive impact because it helps to change some behaviours and, at the same time, inspires the children to want to take responsibility for their home. Nonetheless, a number of areas of the upper and lower hallways are marked and scuffed through a combination of previous damage, wear and tear. Senior leaders say that they have scheduled the re-painting of this communal area. This shortfall is raised again because the delay detracts from the efforts that most of the children are making to cause less physical damage in the home.

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>Children say that they feel safe living in this home because they are confident that the staff hold their best interests at heart. One child said of the new home's manager: 'He knows how to help me to feel safe.' Another child said: 'If I have a problem, I can go to any member of staff and I like that.'</p> <p>There have been no complaints or allegations about staff. Children are aware of the complaints procedure and the routes to raise issues with the managers and leaders. Records show that when children do raise issues they receive clear responses. This means that they feel listened to. In relation to the home's new manager, more than one child said: 'I know that I will be listened to.'</p> <p>Staff talk to children about the impact of challenging behaviour directed towards other children. They try to encourage them to become more socially aware of the impact of inappropriate and discriminatory language, which means that they work with some success towards tackling bullying.</p> <p>However, all the children continue to challenge the staff, and there are occasions where some assault the adults and threaten other children. The frequency and seriousness of incidents are decreasing, which means that there is some improvement in how staff manage conflict. One member of staff said: 'I think we give the children a safe, homely environment. We do the best for them at all times.'</p>	



We put boundaries in, but the children don't always agree with us because we do have to say "no" to them sometimes.' Nonetheless, some records show and some children say that not all staff give consistent messages when conflict arises and, as a result, situations escalate, resulting in a spike in aggression and damage. On one occasion, an unintended consequence from a confrontation, which staff failed to de-escalate, resulted in the arrest of two children.

For those children motivated by money, staff use a financially driven structure to reward good behaviour, frequently to good effect. They also praise children and go out of their way to recognise their achievements. This helps children to feel valued.

Staff implement consequences and, while those sampled raised no concern, some lacked foresight. For example, on more than one occasion staff banned one child from attending a weekly organised community activity, for example, for throwing a cup and refusing to tidy the mess up. For this child, not in an educational placement at the time, the sanction fails to recognise the wider value of external activities.

Children go missing from this home. However, the duration of absence for those children is decreasing, and this represents a significant improvement from their starting points. Staff understand safeguarding principles. For example, they are very good at keeping in touch with the children by phone, which helps them to know that staff want them to be safe and to return home. One child said: 'Before I came here, I would go missing every opportunity I had. I feel differently now because I want to be here and that's because I like this home.'

The home has good working relationships with the local police who say that protocols are followed and staff are responsive. However, because there is not yet a robust system organised and ready for every child to access a return-to-home interview, the complete process of the missing policy falls short. The current arrangement does not help staff to work sufficiently collaboratively with other agencies in order to understand why some children continue to leave the home from time to time.

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<p>Since the interim inspection, the registered manager has resigned. Senior managers acted efficiently to ensure a robust succession plan and thus to ensure that the impact of this change was kept to a minimum for the children.</p> <p>Appointed a few weeks before this inspection and promoted from within the home,</p>	

the deputy is now the manager. Ofsted expects his application for registration. This appointment provides continuity and reassurance for the staff team and the children. Registered for the level 5 management qualification, he says: 'I put myself forward for the position because I see it as an opportunity to have more influence over the outcomes for this group of children.' The children represented in this inspection speak highly of the home's manager. One child voluntarily wrote a letter to senior managers in support of his application. She says: 'He has really helped me since I've been at this home. He is very kind and always listens to everyone and takes everyone's thoughts into consideration.'

The one requirement made at the last inspection is met because staff have worked to improve strategies to manage behaviour, although more work needs to be done. There has been significant movement in the staff team with a number of new staff starting. This inspection found that this has had minimal lasting impact because the majority of children have come to live in the home in the last six months. All staff represented said that they feel well supported and prepared to undertake their roles. Records show that they receive regular and effective supervision, designed to encourage them to improve their practice, and that they access a range of training including training in child sexual exploitation and child protection.

Those who are required to have registered, or are registering, to undertake the level 3 diploma. However, overall arrangements fall short because one member of staff working in this home for over two years has not yet completed the qualification within the required timeframe. The result is that not all staff have the appropriate qualification.

Staff keep a range of records to validate the work that they have been doing, day to day and across each month, with each child and in the home. Examples of key-work sessions sampled are well written and clearly show the quality of the advice and guidance that staff and managers provide children. One placing social worker said: 'When I come to talk to my child about an incident that has happened in the home, I can see that the staff have already spoken to her. This means that one of the good things that they do is talking and reflection after an incident.' However, of the cross section of records sampled, a number of records were not dated, signed, or up to date. This means that the recommendation made at the last inspection is now a regulation.

Put together some time ago, the home's location risk assessment is creative and has the potential to help staff to identify the opportunities and threats from the wider environment. However, because the annual review is overdue and some staff do not recognise the document, this fails to meet regulation. This does not help any new staff who may be unfamiliar with the area to identify potential hazards when children go missing.

Internal and external monitoring of this home continues to help to identify areas for development. Child-centred senior leaders are aware that there are areas for improvement and are working proactively to support the home's new manager as he makes the transition from practitioner to manager.

--

## 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 children looked after 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 that 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 whom 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'.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*, which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2016