

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	27/07/2016
Unique reference number	1213416
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Reflexion Care Group Limited
Registered provider address	Reflexion Care Group Limited, Black Birches, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY4 3DH

Responsible individual	Gregory Watson
Registered manager	Paul Bliss
Inspector	Elaine Cray

Inspection date	27/07/2016
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	Outstanding

1213416

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people live at this home for longer than in previous placements. They grow in self-esteem and have greater emotional resilience as staff stand by them. Staff continue to work with significantly challenging behaviours, when others have given up.
- Young people are safer because they no longer go missing and are not subject to child trafficking and child sexual exploitation.
- Safeguarding and partnership working is strong, robust and makes a significant contribution to keeping young people safe and investigating their concerns.
- Young people experience consistent care as leaders and managers commit to maintaining high levels of staffing, sometimes at additional cost, to keep young people safe.
- Staff remain resilient and committed due to effective managerial support, training and an exceptionally child-centred approach to their work.
- Complaints are extremely well managed and appropriate action is taken, including immediate referral to the local safeguarding officer. Leaders and managers are robust in their response when young people's concerns are upheld and staff disciplinary action is taken.

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:

- Ensure that children looked after understand the legal requirement for the independent reviewing officer of a child looked after to ensure that the child understands that they have an entitlement to independent advocacy support arranged by the child's local authority ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.17).
- Ensure that children understand their rights as a child looked after or child living in a children's home. Children must be informed of how to contact the Office of the Children's Commissioner for advice and assistance about their rights and entitlements ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.19).

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home is registered for two children and young people with emotional and/or behavioural and learning difficulties. Education and therapeutic services are part of this home's statement of purpose.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
This is the home's first inspection.		

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 make progress across aspects of their lives and from their starting points. Strong boundaries and robust safeguarding are not always acceptable to young people living at this home. Relationships between staff and young people are observed to be extremely respectful. However, this level of respect is not reciprocal. The current young person at the home dislikes the majority of staff, is openly disrespectful and rates care and experiences in the home as very poor.</p> <p>Leaders, managers and staff enable young people to make complaints and take appropriate action. This inspection was brought forward due to Ofsted receiving complaints from a young person about the use of a mobile phone, access to the internet, inconsistent staffing and the use of physical intervention.</p> <p>Some young people see supervised use of the internet as an intrusion of privacy and unfair. Current practices in the home include staff sitting with young people when they access the internet. They have access for up to four hours a day. This safeguarding strategy is proportionate to the level of risk that young people present in terms of child sexual exploitation.</p> <p>Similarly, the current restriction on the use of mobile phones is proportionate to the risk that young people present. Staff attempt to build trusting relationships and enable young people to earn back their phones. While young people no longer go missing and are therefore at less risk of child sexual exploitation and trafficking, they still revert back to poor associations when they have access to mobile phones. Current arrangements in the home protect and safeguard young people.</p> <p>The care planning framework is effective, comprehensive and places safety and emotional welfare at the forefront of young people’s support packages. There is excellent connectivity between care planning, risk assessment and placing authority planning. Accountable recording shows that staff have a good understanding of young people’s needs and the consistent implementation of strategies to keep them safe. While young people may resent the structure and boundaries in the home, they fully acknowledge that they no longer go missing and are not exposed to child sexual exploitation.</p> <p>Young people are treated with a high level of respect. Staff value and respect the backgrounds and experiences of young people. Good staff understanding of the impact of domestic violence and child sexual exploitation enables staff to explore and sensitively respond to extremely challenging behaviours.</p> <p>Young people re-engage with education as a result of the supervision, support and encouragement that they receive from staff. Young people with little attendance at</p>	

school now attend and do well in school. They are encouraged to express their artistic flair as well as doing well in core academic subjects such as mathematics and English. Young people now look forward to extending their education at college and express a keen interest in art, design and qualifying as a tattoo artist.

Young people benefit from safe contact with family members. Staff work hard to embrace and maintain positive relationships with family members. This approach helps young people with significant attachment difficulties to maintain relationships within their family group.

Staff's high regard for the mental and emotional health of young people is reflected in face-to-face work with young people and their sensitive and determined responses of the challenging behaviours presented by young people.

Staff liaise with agencies, such as child and adolescent mental health services, to support young people with their mental health. Young people are not always keen to engage with the provision's therapist, but are open to chatting when visiting head office. Young people still benefit from therapeutic input as staff maintain positive connections with the home's therapist in order to develop their knowledge that is required to support young people with some very complex and extreme behaviours.

Young people receive, but often choose to ignore, good staff advice about healthy eating and giving up smoking. For example, giving up smoking appointments have been made at the local surgery but have not been kept by young people. Input on budgeting and shopping for a healthier diet has some impact as young people now buy some fruit as part of their weekly shop.

Staff provide structured and supportive programmes for young people to develop independence skills and knowledge. Young people currently budget a weekly amount of money. They have to contribute towards bills, do their own shopping, cooking and maintain their physical environment. Most recent challenges include making health appointments and planning journeys and using public transport. While young people may resent these developments towards independent living, the structures in place support the placement planning and partnership working with young people's placing authority.

Young people live in and appreciate the good quality accommodation, having invested their own time in choosing decor and furnishings for the home.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Safety procedures and staff practice are robust. Safeguarding protocols, inter-agency liaison and staff practice are all rigorous and respond effectively to the risks and vulnerability of young people. Individual risk management plans are clear	

about going missing and other risks, such as self-injurious behaviours, substance misuse and use of the internet.

Effective partnership working between staff, police, missing from care coordinators and both local and placing authority child sexual exploitation teams promotes a robust safeguarding response. Young people are safer with robust and rigorous missing from care procedures. Staff will follow young people when they leave the home without permission to prevent them from re-engaging with poor associations.

Behaviour management plans are detailed and place the young person at the centre of staff practice. Attention to detail is excellent and strategies connect across all aspects of young people's lives, including education arrangements, use of mobile phones and internet and accessing the local and wider community.

Behaviour management training is extensive and all staff working in and joining the core staff team are effectively trained. Behaviour management strategies are clearly set out, with a clear onus on de-escalation techniques. Staff are aware of triggers and the need for consistent messaging to young people.

Young people make good progress in terms of their starting points. They are more able to self-regulate behaviours. For example, while significant events still occur, they can better identify trigger points and will sometimes take themselves away from potential conflict situations.

Patterns and trends in physical intervention are closely monitored. In reality, the frequency of physical intervention is generally low when compared to the rate of significant incidents in the home. Staff show excellent perseverance, patience and insight. Great consideration is given to the safe use of physical intervention and this includes taking the physical environment into consideration. As a result, physical intervention is only used as a last resort and keeps young people and others in the home safe.

Incident reporting shows a high level of regard for accountability when staff have to use physical restraint to promote the safety of young people and staff working in the home. Levels of physical intervention are proportionate to highly aggressive and violent behaviour presented by young people to staff. All complaints about injury are passed to the local authority safeguarding officer for investigation and no further action has been required as a result of these referrals.

There are no current concerns about bullying at the home. Compatibility assessment places the potential for bullying as a high priority and promotes young people's safety and sense of well-being.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
<p>The registered manager has managed this home since it was first registered in October 2016. He has extensive experience and a suitable level 4 qualification in management.</p> <p>Staffing arrangements in the home meet the needs of the young people and a young person’s concerns about staffing are not upheld. Disruption due to the turnover of substantive staff after assaults and allegations made against them has been minimised by managers and leaders in this organisation. Leaders and managers have also responded effectively as new staff are introduced to the team, as the placing authority agrees to a higher ratio of staffing to keep young people safe. Directors, the manager and staff consistently strive to maintain staffing to include familiar and experienced staff. They do exceptionally well with detailed communication, including excellent information sharing in handover meetings to provide young people with firm boundaries.</p> <p>Effective communication and shift organisation minimise disruption as staff from other homes come to work in this home. Staff have an in-depth understanding of how domestic abuse, neglect and child sexual exploitation impacts on young people’s self-esteem and their ability to make attachments with others. This understanding gives resilience to staff and the ability not to personalise the sometimes extremely challenging and violent behaviour directed towards them. The young person currently at the home is kept safe and welfare is promoted.</p> <p>Staff training is managed to ensure seamless progression from induction, probationary training and then timely registration for a level 3 diploma in caring for children. All experienced staff have completed their level 3 qualification. Staff also receive specific training according to the needs of the young people, to include drug misuse, child sexual exploitation and self-injurious behaviours. Regular staff supervision, staff meetings and handover discussions embed consistent practice across the staff team, thus promoting the home’s statement of purpose.</p> <p>Individuals receive good information about the service because the home’s statement of purpose is kept up to date. Young people also receive a young people’s guide, which is used as part of planned transitions to the home. This information sets out clear expectations for both staff and young people. Such clarity is essential for young people who persistently challenge and complain about the structures and boundaries in the home.</p> <p>The manager and staff are willing to challenge placing authorities when placement planning or responses to young people’s needs are not robust. For example, the manager and directors consistently challenge the placing authority in terms of maintaining appropriate staffing levels in light of the risk presented to and by young people in the home. As a result, young people attempting to repeat history and break down placements now experience stability and a sense of permanence.</p>	

During recent challenging times in the home, the manager, staff and provider have worked tirelessly to promote the welfare and safety of young people. This child-centred approach also includes the directors of the company and is an excellent reflection of the cohesion between staff, managers and leaders.

Placing young people's views at the centre of the organisation is evidenced as staff, managers and directors listen to a succession of complaints by young people. They work in an open and transparent way with young people, safeguarding agencies, the police and Ofsted to facilitate and try to resolve young people's complaints. While young people willingly and routinely use the complaints processes, they lack independent advocacy.

The home is progressive and improves because the manager and staff are open to scrutiny from independent monitoring, other professionals and young people. For example, the manager uses feedback from monitoring visits to improve the new admissions checklist. The process is much improved and used by other managers in the organisation to ensure that the young person, pre-planning and communication sharing is at the core of staff practice.

Monthly integrated managers' meetings between education, therapy and managers also monitor young people's progress. Registered managers routinely meet with the directors. Issues and new ideas are taken forward and working parties are created to ensure that developments come to fruition. This proactive approach is good for the service and for the development of managers and staff.

The manager is outward looking and embraces working in partnership with agencies. This approach keeps young people safe, opens up new ideas and drives improvement. Lack of shortfalls in this inspection exemplifies the positive outcomes from robust monitoring by the management team and staff.

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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