

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	06/09/2016
Unique reference number	1228092
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Personal Security Service Ltd
Registered provider address	Personal Security Service Ltd, 284 Chase Road, London, N14 6HF

Responsible individual	Frederik Booyesen
Registered manager	Nichola Brown
Inspector	Rosie Davie

Inspection date	06/09/2016
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

1228092

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- In a short time most children make significant progress from their starting points.
- Children engage in education and learning when there has been a significant history of difficulty.
- Most children respond very positively to the help, encouragement and guidance offered by staff.
- Children have confidence in the staff and often ask for their help.
- Children talk to staff about their previous life experiences.
- Children receive help to access specialised mental health support.
- Placement plans are clear and appropriately detailed. They describe the individualised approach for helping children to progress and to keep them safe.
- Well-constructed risk assessments direct staff towards potential areas of concern, which helps to reduce dangers.
- Agencies represented say that communication is very good and the outcomes for their children are impressive.
- Children receive good emotional and practical support to help them to remain in contact with those who are significant.
- Children significantly reduce the frequency and the intensity of self-injurious behaviours.
- Children previously known to go missing reduce this behaviour significantly.
- Two regulatory shortfalls relate to the recruitment process and the de-escalation of confrontations. Two failures to meet the quality standards relate to matching and physical intervention.

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 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 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 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>	28/10/2016
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety with specific reference to initial reference requests and risk assessments. (Regulation 32(1))</p>	28/10/2016

Recommendations

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

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- In a restraint situation, staff should use their professional judgement, supported by their knowledge of each child's risk assessment, an understanding of the needs of the child and an understanding of the risks the child faces. This is with specific reference to when any child makes allegations against staff. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 48, paragraph 9.53)

Full report

Information about this children's home

A single home, this independent provider offers care and support for up to four children of either gender with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
None		

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>Following registration in April 2016 this is the first inspection.</p> <p>A small number of children have lived in the home. So far the outcomes have differed. This is because the registered manager ended two placements. However, those children have retained some contact with staff. The other children continue to progress exceptionally well. One child said: 'It is a shame that some have just not wanted to be here. Living here is one of the best things that has ever happened to me. I love everything about it.' This means that this child sees the positive difference that living in this home makes.</p> <p>The children receive individualised and personalised care. Well-written and clearly documented plans show the work that the staff intend to, and do, carry out with each child. The plans evidence the approach for addressing the behavioural issues described in referral paperwork and also those present in placement.</p> <p>Weekly meetings with staff provide a regular, structured forum for the children to record their views, wishes and preferences in relation to the planned routines for the home. This arrangement complements the routine discussion taking place each day with the children about their care. This approach helps children to feel valued and encourages them to invest in their environment. One child said: 'In this house we are all just like one big family'.</p> <p>The staff invest time in the children. They patiently offer support and guidance to encourage them to get involved in what is going on in the home. For example, all of the children are encouraged to go swimming, go cycling, or play table tennis. Additionally, staff proactively encourage them to give them direction about the other activities that they would like to try, encouraging them to experience new things such as going on holiday. One child said: 'If we want to do something the staff will make it happen'. The result is that the children access a range of social and recreational activities in the home and in the local community.</p> <p>The staff persevere and are good at helping the children to engage with other agencies in their network, for example, education tutors, the 'looked after nurse', specialist mental health services and youth offending services. This means that the home is outward facing and the result for the children is that they get the systemic help that they need and participate in their care plan. This helps them to progress and achieve.</p> <p>The staff take a proactive approach to education. For example, they make links with local schools and the virtual school head. This helps them to keep up to date with the services available for children referred to the home. Their knowledge enables them to advocate for</p>	

children and to take an active role in discussions about appropriate education provision. When necessary they challenge the placing authority to ensure that any alternative provision is meaningful. At the same time they work with children to encourage and enhance their learning, for example, by taking them to the library. The emphasis placed on the importance of education helps children who have been out of formal systems to re-engage. For example, one child has recently enrolled on a course at a local college, representing a significant achievement for that individual. All of this sets the scene for ensuring that children have meaningful opportunities to reach their potential in education, thus helping them to prepare for adulthood.

The staff nurture the children. They encourage them to take pride in their appearance, resulting in improvements in their overall physical presentation. They receive generous personal funds. These arrangements enable them to, for example, change their hairstyles, and choose culturally appropriate personal products. This values children and encourages them to express their individuality. One representative from a placing authority said: 'Our child is so now so much more outgoing.'

Individualised family contact plans provide the opportunity for the children to remain connected with those who are important to them. The staff recognise and are responsive to the emotional impact of family relationships. This helps the children to recognise and talk about their feelings.

The home's interior offers ample space for each child. Bedrooms are highly personalised and children are encouraged to put up photographs and pictures. This helps them to take pride in their environment. They are encouraged to develop and practise the skills necessary for preparing to live independently, for example, budgeting, meal planning, cooking and laundry. One representative from a placing authority said: 'Our child is in a good place that will give her a good chance for the future.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good

Children know how to complain. To complement the sensitive welcome from staff they receive written information in a child-friendly booklet which reminds them about what they can expect while living in this home. They have a good understanding of the role of the registered manager and describe her as approachable and available. Records show that when children do complain the manager takes issues seriously and provides a clear response. This helps children to feel listened to.

Children referred with previous histories of absconding do go missing from this home. Staff

robustly record all incidents of absent and missing, which helps each shift to have a clear overview of the patterns and trends developing for each individual where absence is a concern. Staff work effectively together, liaising efficiently with relevant stakeholders to highlight all incidents of missing and thus placing an emphasis on a multi-agency approach. This method helps to reduce the likelihood of children coming to further harm in the wider community. Of the vast majority of incidents, children respond to staff efforts to keep in contact with them. The result is that they return to the home of their own accord and go on to talk to staff about what they have been doing. This complements the formal return to home interview process. All of this evidences the value that children place on their developing relationships with staff. One child said: 'I don't go missing. But, I know because I see when others do, that the staff would be straight out looking for me, the police would be called, and everyone would be very worried about me.' The result is that for children with significant histories of missing the frequency and length of time that they are absent reduces considerably.

Clearly recorded risk assessments help staff to identify potential safeguarding concerns. For example, there are clear plans concerning the action to take to support children known to cause self-injury. While this is a new home and staff are working on their rapport with the children, children say that they feel confident that the staff know how to help them. The result is they feel very well supported and the frequency and severity of self-injury is reducing markedly. One member of staff said that while supporting a child 'I told her that no matter what we would get through it'. A representative from a placing local authority said: 'There has been a drastic reduction in self-injury for our child.'

Each child has a clear behaviour management plan that offers suggestions about how to approach each individual. Staff use creative reparative approaches to encourage children to learn from, for example, incidents of aggression. This helps the children to understand the impact of their behaviour. One child said: 'The staff are fair and try to help us to learn when things go wrong.' Of the serious incidents that do occur in the home staff are mindful and do not want to unnecessarily criminalise the children. However, in more than one example sampled a child intervened to try to de-escalate another child's potentially violent behaviour. This falls short of the positive relationship standard because each member of the team is required to demonstrate that they have the confidence and skill to manage challenge from or between children.

Records and discussions with staff show that physical intervention is used only as a last resort, to safeguard individuals and to prevent damage to property. As a result physical intervention is rare. However, of an example sampled, one member of staff became involved in a physical intervention after the child had made an allegation about him. This shortfall in quality standards demonstrates that staff did not use professional judgement effectively in this instance.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>Across a number of months the manager was involved in the setting up of the home. She registered with Ofsted at the same time as the home was registered to open and is currently working to complete the required level 5 management and leadership diploma. Her professional background and qualifications mean that she is well equipped to take on her first registered manager's role. All of the staff represented in this inspection spoke highly of the time and energy she puts into ensuring that the children receive high standards of care and that placement plans are meticulously clear. Placing authorities represented in this inspection echoed this view. One said: 'I am very impressed.' The children describe her as an adult that they have confidence in.</p> <p>The staff team is forming and there has been some movement in the group which the experienced deputy and registered manager work hard to ensure has minimal impact for the children. The deputy manager said: 'We are working hard to form a strong resilient team.' However, the complete recruitment processes falls short of regulation because although managers seek and verify references, the initial information fails to make clear that the request relates specifically to working in a children's home. Additionally, the registered manager and responsible individual have not completed risk assessments where the vetting procedure reveals historical convictions. While there is no impact for the children living in the home, these practices, if continued have the potential to provide unsuitable individuals with access to vulnerable children.</p> <p>Those staff who should, have the required level 3 qualification and others with previous experience of working with children but not of residential care, are registering. The training opportunities ensure that staff have a good understanding of safeguarding and exploitation. One member of the team said: 'I have had a lot of support to learn.' Additionally the registered manager takes an active role on shift. Records show that she does stay late to support staff. She says: 'I think that at this stage it is important to model the practice that I am looking for.' This means that alongside supporting staff through induction, probation and supervision, she has an active understanding of the impact of staffs' practice. This helps to provide good-quality, consistent experiences for children.</p> <p>As she is aware of the importance of partnership working to achieve the best outcomes for children, the manager takes a proactive approach to forging links in the wider community. As a result the home is developing effective working relationships with external professionals. More than one representative said 'communication is very good'. The registered manager is motivated to work transparently with agencies. For example she appropriately refers any safeguarding concerns to the designated officers for the local authority. Internal investigations include actions to improve practice. The managers also identify lessons to learn from incidents in the home and ensure that there is appropriate</p>	

reflection within the wider staff team. This means that the forming team are mindful of the impact of their work with the children and are motivated to improve practice.

Effectively using feedback from the external monitoring systems, the registered manager has already begun to make changes to some of the internal systems in order to make improvements in the paperwork. This means that recording systems are regularly quality assured for efficiency and effectiveness. The managers routinely make clear to the team their expectations in relation to policy and practice. They also provide feedback to them about the quality of their written work, which in turn helps to meet regulation in this area. The registered manager is preparing to complete the required review of the quality of care and has prepared feedback forms for relevant stakeholders.

The managers are disappointed that two placements came to an end. They reluctantly reached decisions to request alternative provisions due to the emerging impact of some behaviours on other more vulnerable children. The registered manager does carefully consider referral paperwork to ensure that the most appropriate match is made for the current children placed. However, having committed to continue looking after one child whose circumstances mean that she is currently particularly vulnerable, more is required to ensure that children are appropriately matched.

With the active support of the responsible individual the registered manager and deputy ensure that the home is maintained to a high standard, that staff have access to a plethora of resources and that the quality of the service provided reflects the information described in the home's detailed statement of purpose. A representative from one placing authority said: 'I can't fault them. The progress of our child is absolutely amazing.'

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 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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