

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	24/10/2016
Unique reference number	1227330
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Positive Outcomes Childcare Limited
Registered provider address	The Lexington, 8 Shoplatch, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 1HF

Responsible individual	Neil Hedges
Registered manager	Winston Damerum
Inspector	Anne Daly

Inspection date	24/10/2016
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	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

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Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people are positive about the care and support that they receive. They say that they feel safe and comfortable in the home. They know that staff really care about them, and are striving to provide good-quality care.
- Staff work hard to form positive, trusting relationships with young people. This helps young people to settle in the home and to grow in confidence.
- The registered manager ensures that care planning is individualised and enables staff to focus on each young person's needs.
- Planning for admission is detailed. The registered manager carefully considers any new admissions and the potential impact upon other young people.
- Staff make sure that young people regularly attend their educational placements. All young people are making good progress from their starting points.
- The registered manager makes sure that when young people have specific areas of risk, there are positive safety plans in place to take action to manage and address the risk.
- Staff provide good support and care that has helped young people to significantly reduce their previous unsafe behaviour that made them vulnerable to harm.
- The manager ensures that staff promote contact for young people so that they sustain close relationships with people who are important to them.
- Staff work well with social workers, educators and others to equip young people with the emotional resilience, and practical knowledge, that they need for adult life.
- Staff encourage young people to have their say in the running of the home, through participation in house meetings and key work sessions. One area identified for improvement is the recording of the outcome of these discussions.
- There are a few shortfalls in practice. There is no workforce plan and not all staff are appropriately trained to meet the specific needs of the young people placed. There are gaps in the employment history for one staff member.

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. They must ensure that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.</p> <p>This is in specific reference to gaps in employment history. (Regulation 32 (1)(3)(d))</p>	05/12/2016
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development.</p> <p>This is in specific relation to training to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation and self-harm. (Regulation 33 (4)(a))</p>	05/12/2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that there is a workforce plan in place which can fulfil the requirements of Regulation 16 Schedule 1.
(‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- Ensure that young people are able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon, with particular reference to young people’s meetings.
(‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 22, paragraph 4.11)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is privately owned. It provides care and accommodation for up to three young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

This is the first inspection following registration.

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home	Good
<p>Young people benefit from living in a home where staff are passionate and committed to making a positive difference in young people's lives. One young person commented, 'This is [the] best home I have lived in. Staff treat us with respect. They are always there for us. We know they care.'</p> <p>Staff provide each young person with well-planned, good-quality care. Staff are making a positive impact on the progress and experiences of all three young people. The young people are settled and enjoy the care, attention and positive approach of staff, who think about what help young people need and how best to provide it.</p> <p>Staff develop positive relationships with young people. They spend as much time as they can with young people and show an interest in their friendships, relationships and hobbies. Staff talk to young people while they cook, eat, shop, go dog walking or to the gym. Staff are patient and look for ways to help and support young people. As a result, young people are relaxed in the home and will talk to staff about their frustrations, worries and concerns. Staff advocate for young people with respect to education, relationships and care planning issues. Staff teach young people appropriate ways to respond and to conduct their friendships and relationships with others. As one placing social worker stated, 'Staff don't give up. They keep persevering. They have clear expectations and young people respond positively. They know staff care.'</p> <p>The manager ensures that young people have detailed care plans that address how their needs will be met. He makes sure that new admissions are effectively planned and risk assessed. Staff implement the plans well, with regular updates and reviews to reflect young people's changing needs and progress. Young people are fully included in decisions about their care plans and are supported to ensure that their views are heard at reviews and planning meetings with other agencies.</p> <p>Staff make sure that young people are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians. Young people attend their routine health appointments with good support and encouragement from staff. Young people have access to the specialist services that they need to promote their physical, emotional and psychological well-being. Staff are tactful but clear when they give young people advice about healthy living. Staff research and obtain helpful information to guide young people. As a result, young people are beginning to make positive choices about healthy eating and smoking.</p> <p>The manager works closely with education providers to ensure that young people receive the maximum benefit from education and receive tailored programmes to meet their individual needs. Young people's attendance is excellent. For some</p>	

young people when their education attendance prior to placement was erratic, this is a significant improvement. Staff promote the value of learning and young people voice enthusiasm for their education provision. As one young person stated, 'I'm learning so much. They are helping me to develop my life skills and prepare me for college.' When issues do arise, staff are proactive in helping young people to deal with issues, so that any disruption to their education is minimal.

The manager enables young people to be fully involved in day-to-day decisions in the home. Young people contribute their views through regular meetings and constant communication with staff. This helps to ensure that young people have ownership of decisions made in the home and that they can start to take personal responsibility for themselves. One young person reported, 'We can decide on activities and other things we do. We always get listened to.' However, the outcomes from these discussions are not always evident and staff recording is poor.

The manager works closely with placing authorities to promote contact with family and friends that is positive and safe. This is regardless of how far they are placed from their family. It ensures that young people continue to build relationships and attachments with those significant to them. For some young people who have previously had fractured relationships with parents, this has been a significant improvement. Family members are positive about staff support. As one parent commented, 'Staff are very welcoming and keep me well informed. It feels like a real family there.'

The manager ensures that young people have the opportunity to develop new skills, with good support and encouragement from staff. For example, some young people prepare their own meals, wash laundry and one young person has undertaken paid work experience. Young people successfully learn to recognise risk and are encouraged to take age-appropriate decisions.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Young people say that they feel safe in the home and with the staff who look after them. Young people say that they are able to talk to staff if they are concerned or upset, and that appropriate support is provided. In the words of one young person, 'You can rely on staff. I know they care.'</p> <p>Risks for young people are well understood and managed with the support of personalised risk management plans. These guide staff to effectively understand young people's specific vulnerabilities and the challenges that they present. Staff understand that risk is dynamic. They are responsive to young people's changing needs. Risks are well managed, with clear plans in place for issues such as missing from home incidents, child sexual exploitation and self-harm.</p>	

Incidents of young people being missing from care are decreasing. There are effective agreed strategies with placing authorities, families and the police to make coordinated efforts to locate young people. Young people are consistently offered independent return interviews. Any serious concerns are escalated to multi-disciplinary strategy meetings. This ensures that all safeguarding professionals are working together to assess and minimise risk.

For some young people, drug misuse is an area of concern. Staff respond effectively and make referrals to specialist agencies. The local community police officer has also visited the home to raise the young people's awareness of the wider safeguarding risks linked with substance misuse, going missing behaviour and criminal activity. Staff undertake individual work with young people on the dangers of drug misuse and associated risks. These key working sessions are used proactively to help young people to reflect on their risk-taking behaviour. This ensures that young people are supported to access specialist support and information to help them to make the right choices to keep themselves safe.

Staff support young people to develop coping and distraction techniques to manage incidents of self-harm. Consequently, incidents of self-harm have been reduced.

Staff model and promote acceptable behaviour. Individual behaviour management plans help staff to identify triggers for negative behaviour and the strategies for managing these behaviours. Staff use key working sessions to effectively support young people to manage their own behaviour. There is a consistent approach to behaviour management throughout the whole staff team, which helps young people to behave appropriately. There have been no incidents when restrictive physical intervention has been used. This indicates that staff are skilled at de-escalating situations, and defusing anger and aggression.

Young people are able to raise any concerns that they may have with staff. They are confident that staff will listen to their concerns and complaints, and deal with them appropriately. This helps young people to feel safe and secure, and protects them from the risk of harm.

Young people benefit from living in a home that has a safe and secure environment. Regular health and safety checks ensure that the equipment works well and that fire drills are regularly completed. There is a detailed location risk assessment that highlights risk factors in the surrounding area and indicates how these will be managed.

The manager ensures that young people are protected by the organisation's recruitment practices. Staff are vetted and assessed as suitable before any appointment is confirmed. Gaps in the employment history for one staff member have not been appropriately verified. This compromises the organisation's recruitment procedures that promote the safety of the young people by preventing unsuitable adults from working with them.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>This home was registered in April 2016. This is the first inspection. The registered manager has been in post since registration. He is an experienced manager and holds a level 4 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare. He is passionate about providing the best care and experiences for the young people.</p> <p>The staff team is enthusiastic and demonstrates high levels of commitment to ensuring that young people progress and achieve. The staff are mainly experienced and most are qualified. Those who are unqualified are within regulatory timescales to obtain their qualification. The staff team is stable and good staff morale is evident, with staff consistently reporting that the home is a good place to work. As one staff member commented, 'By far [the] best manager I have worked with. He is aware of my individual development needs. The other staff [are] supportive. This is the job of my dreams.'</p> <p>The manager understands the strengths and areas for development for the home, and he has an ambitious and achievable plan in place to ensure that the service progresses. These plans include team development, additional training for staff, and involvement of young people in the development of the home. Young people benefit as the care that they receive and the environment that they live in continues to evolve and improve.</p> <p>Staff who receive regular supervision support young people. They benefit as staff have opportunities to reflect on young people's welfare and progress. All staff complete the home's induction and core training. However, not all staff have undertaken additional training to address young people's specific needs. For example, to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation and self-harm, reflecting the current young people's vulnerabilities. This means that not all staff have the necessary understanding and skills to meet young people's needs.</p> <p>The statement of purpose is clear and concise and the service provided by staff meets its objectives. The manager is developing the monitoring standards within the home. The monthly independent visitor provides rigorous external scrutiny of the service provided by the home. The manager values the suggestions made by the independent visitor and sees these as an opportunity to improve the service to young people.</p> <p>Young people are provided with a good-quality children's guide that allows young people to see where they will live and who will be looking after them. It also informs them about their rights and what to do if they have a concern or complaint.</p> <p>There is currently no workforce plan. This impacts upon the ability of the registered manager to plan future staffing sufficiency.</p> <p>The manager promotes positive partnership working with external agencies to benefit young people. Staff are proactive in their efforts to engage the relevant</p>	

agencies as and when required. For example, the local police community support officer regularly visits the home to meet the young people. An educational professional commented, 'I have been able to establish a very positive and productive working relationship with the manager.' This partnership approach promotes young people's safety and welfare.

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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