

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	15/11/2016
Unique reference number	SC368032
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Constant Child Care Ltd
Registered provider address	Beecham Business Centre Beecham Business Park Northgate Aldridge West Midlands WS9 8TZ

Responsible individual	Barry Edwards
Registered manager	Lisa Sherwood
Inspector	Julia Wright

Inspection date	15/11/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
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	Requires improvement

SC368032

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people make progress in all areas of their development. They are provided with good-quality individualised care from committed staff.
- Staff have positive and nurturing relationships with young people.
- Staff work well together as a team to manage young people's behaviour.
- Two young people are in school, and managers and staff are proactively seeking a full-time school placement for another young person.
- Staff are effective role models, positively helping young people's personal and social development.
- Young people's relationships with family and friends are valued by staff.
- Young people are treated with dignity and respect, and their diverse needs respected.
- Positive feedback was received from young people, their families and professionals.
- There are a few shortfalls in areas of practice: physical intervention episodes are not accurately recorded; young people's files do not contain all the information required; and there are shortfalls in supervision, training and appraisals for staff. In addition, not all staff are confident about the process to follow if there is an allegation made against a staff member, and staff do not have systems in place to identify where young people need help to progress.

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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must: (4)(a) ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing development; (b) receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and (c) have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33(4)(a)(b)(c))	06/01/2017
The registered person must ensure that: (a) within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes- (iv) a description of the measure and its duration; (v) details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need of the use of the measure. (c) within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(iv)(v)(c))	06/01/2017
The registered person must maintain records (case records) for each child which: (a) include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child – in particular, a copy of the child's birth certificate and school report. (Regulation 36(a))	06/01/2017

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that young people live in an environment, which meets their basic day-to-day needs. In particular, ensure that improvements to one young person's bedroom are completed. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)
- Ensure that the registered person builds a strong safeguarding culture in the home. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards',

page 43, paragraph 9.8)

- Ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

- Ensure that the registered person oversees the welfare of the children in their care through observation and engagement with each child and the home's staff. In particular, have systems in place to review each young person's progress at the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.23)

Full report

Information about this children's home

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
30/07/2015	Full	Good
24/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
29/09/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home	Good
<p>Since the last inspection, there have been changes to the young people living at the home. Young people have left to move to other placements, or moved back home to their families. Young people comment favourably about their lives at the home. One said, 'I like it here. I like my own space and staff respect that, but I can also spend time with staff when I want to.'</p> <p>Young people have positive, friendly relationships with staff, and staff treat each young person with dignity and respect. The atmosphere in the home is one of fun and enjoyment. At the same time, staff work well together to reinforce boundaries, and young people are clear about expectations. They receive a consistent response from the staff team about behavioural expectations.</p> <p>Managers and staff prioritise education, and young people learn the significance of why this is vital to their future opportunities. When young people are not in full-time education, managers and staff liaise with all relevant professionals to ensure that an appropriate full-time education placement is identified. Staff promote education in the home, and help young people with formal education activities as well as learning through play. School attendance and punctuality are excellent for both young people. This maximises their opportunities to learn and develop.</p> <p>Young people have made progress in relation to their health needs. One young person has had a significant reduction in self-harm incidents. Both young people participate in routine health appointments, and if they need more specialised services, these are in place. Liaison between staff and health professionals is good, meaning that young people's health needs are met. Medication arrangements are robust and safe.</p> <p>Young people are supported to learn age-appropriate independence skills. For example, one young person has started to travel home independently from school, reflecting a significant improvement in her self-confidence. Young people keep their rooms clean and tidy, and complete laundry and other household tasks where appropriate. Young people progress towards independence, and are equipped with essential self-care skills.</p> <p>Young people enjoy a variety of activities within the home and wider community. These include visits to the cinema, parks, shops and sports club. They have opportunities to try new activities. This promotes their self-esteem. In addition, young people are involved in the day-to-day running of the home wherever possible. They personalise their rooms to their own taste, and are involved in</p>	

decision-making about activities and weekly menus. Young people are reassured that adults are interested in their views and opinions, which increases their self-confidence and self-respect.

Young people are supported to retain contact with their family and friends despite where they live. When needed, staff accompany them on visits and support them afterwards. Young people stay in contact with important people, and retain a sense of their identity and roots. A parent commented, 'I am very happy with the progress she is making, particularly with her independence skills, including travelling on her own. She is happy there, and staff keep me up to date and are always welcoming and friendly.'

Young people live in a clean and comfortable home. Some areas need ongoing attention. In particular, damage is evident in one bedroom, reflecting the young person's complex needs. This detracts from the overall good standards within the home.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Young people live in a home where staff prioritise their safety and ensure that the environment is warm and nurturing. Staff work hard together as a team to ensure this, regardless of the diverse needs of young people. Young people are encouraged and supported to behave in ways that are socially acceptable. All staff are trained in appropriate behaviour-management practices. Sanctions are used occasionally, but the staff approach is to talk to young people and identify more productive ways to behave in the future.</p> <p>For some young people, as a last resort physical restraint is used, and is necessary to manage immediate risks or dangerous behaviour. Generally, records are detailed and explain the appropriateness of the measures used. Managers are then able to evaluate staff practice, or determine whether the physical intervention was used safely. In a small number of instances, records do not fully explain the de-escalation techniques used by staff leading to a physical intervention, or confirm that the young person was spoken to after the incident. Young people's safety may not be fully promoted in these circumstances.</p> <p>Young people rarely go missing from the home, but when this has happened they are not always offered a return home interview by an independent person. Consequently, they may miss an opportunity to talk to an adult about something that is troubling them.</p> <p>Managers and staff work closely with local police to promote the safety of each</p>	

young person. A local police officer visits from time to time, and talks to the young people, helping them to understand the role of the police in the community and enhancing their citizenship skills. Managers and staff have promptly referred allegations made by young people to the appropriate professionals, but not all staff are confident in the process to follow if a young person makes an allegation against a member of staff. Further clarification of the procedure will reinforce staff knowledge, and underpin young people's safety in the home.

The home provides young people with appropriate levels of physical safety and security. This is achieved through risk assessments, which are overseen by managers. In addition, health and safety arrangements are adhered to. Regular fire checks and drills are undertaken, promoting safety for all. Other checks of equipment and services are undertaken at intervals, and any deficits quickly identified and repaired.

All prospective employees undergo comprehensive screening to establish their suitability to work with young people, and safe recruitment practice protects young people living at the home from adults who may wish to harm them. Visitors are carefully checked and vetted, which promotes safety in the home.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
<p>Since the last inspection, the interim manager has registered with Ofsted, and has been in post as registered manager since October 2016. The registered manager has a level 3 diploma in working with children and young people. She is undertaking her Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare.</p> <p>The registered manager prioritises the well-being of each young person in her care, and she strives to ensure that they continue to make progress in each area of their development. Managers monitor targets and plans given to them by local authorities. But, young people's records do not reflect how the staff team prioritises specific areas to work on with young people, and they do not clearly highlight how young people progress from their starting points. Young people may miss opportunities to develop additional skills.</p> <p>Young people's files do not contain all the documentation required by regulation, including a birth certificate and school reports. Managers and staff request these documents from placing authorities but have not received them. Consequently, staff do not have all the essential information they need to meet young people's needs.</p>	

There are shortfalls in staff training, and some staff have not completed refresher training in first aid or child sexual exploitation. Not all staff have received training specific to the needs of young people currently living in the home – in particular, with regard to caring for young people with autism spectrum disorder and young people who self-harm. This means that staff may lack the required skills and understanding to meet young people's needs. All staff have the required Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare, or are enrolled to undertake the course. This means that staff have the opportunity to gain essential skills to work with young people they look after.

There are shortfalls in staff receiving regular supervision. Some staff have significant gaps between supervision sessions taking place, contrary to the arrangements outlined in the home's statement of purpose. As a result, young people are cared for by staff who are not supported or supervised effectively. Additional shortfalls with annual appraisals failing to take place mean that staff have not had the opportunity to discuss their performance or have developmental needs identified. The registered manager has identified this as an area for improvement.

The registered manager has good-quality and productive relationships with other professionals. An education professional commented, 'Staff have demonstrated a good insight into his needs and a willingness to work with all professionals involved.' The registered manager challenges other agencies appropriately. Young people benefit, as adults work well together to promote their needs.

Managers and staff are vigilant, and challenge shortfalls in provision for young people. For example, one young person was at the point of being excluded from school when he joined the home, and staff worked with professionals to integrate him back into the classroom, supporting school staff if he presented challenging behaviour. A teacher commented, 'School is very happy with the support and communication of staff at the home. The professionalism of all involved has been to a very high standard.'

The registered manager has a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the home. Areas for development include recruitment of a full complement of permanent care staff, an extension of the home to provide an additional bedroom, and ensuring all staff are up to date with training, supervision and appraisals. These plans mean that the service continues to develop and benefit all young people living at the home.

A requirement made at the last inspection has been met. The large metal gates have been moved out of reach of young people, improving health and safety for all. A recommendation has also been met, and young people's case records are kept up to date, meaning that communication between staff about each young person is relevant to their current needs.

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 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'.

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. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email 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.

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, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at 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
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2016