

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	15/12/2016
Unique reference number	SC030713
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	David Green
Inspector	James Harmon

Inspection date	15/12/2016
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 are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC473335

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- The young people, who have complex needs, enjoy excellent experiences participating in a wide variety of services offered by the centre.
- An experienced, consistent, stable staff team knows the young people well and has forged positive relationships with them.
- Staff are skilful at obtaining the views of all young people even those that cannot communicate verbally. These views are the driving force of how services are delivered.
- There is excellent planning, which supports young people to achieve goals that they are working towards. These are reviewed regularly and revised when needed.
- A planned induction allows young people to familiarise themselves with the centre and information is available in a child-friendly format that helps them to quickly settle in.
- Staff working provide effective support to young people and their parents in their own homes.
- There is an abundance of purposeful activities available inside and outside in the community for young people to enjoy.
- No safeguarding concerns have arisen for the young people for a significant length of time.
- Recruitment of new staff is always completed rigorously with the safety of the young people in mind.
- Medication is handled and administered in a meticulous manner.
- The manager has been in post for over eight years and provides excellent leadership and management of the service.
- Monitoring by the manager is forward thinking and undertaken extensively.
- The one requirement and two recommendations arising do not detract from the excellent experiences of the young people and all previous requirements and recommendations have always been promptly met.

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>25 Fire precautions</p> <p>(1) After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must—</p> <p>(a) provide adequate means of escape from the home in the event of fire.</p> <p>This relates to young people in wheelchairs having personal emergency evacuation plans in place.</p> <p>(Regulation 25 (1)(b))</p>	<p>21/02/2017</p>

Recommendations

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

- The design of the home should, where appropriate, enable children to develop independence skills within the supportive environment of the home, including through encouraging independent use of kitchen and laundry areas. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', April 2015, page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- Any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person must make a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', April 2015, page 65, paragraph 15.5)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The children's home is a resource centre for children with disabilities and their families and is owned and managed by the local council. One of the services offered at the centre is residential short-break care for children with a disability. It is this aspect of the centre's activity that is regulated under the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. The centre is registered for up to five young people to be accommodated at a time, who have a learning and/or physical disability. Many of the children also present challenging behaviour. Other services offered include day care, after school care, outreach services and a social work team for low risk cases.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
19/11/2015	Full	Outstanding
24/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
30/12/2014	Full	Outstanding

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>Outstanding</p>
<p>The resource centre provides exceptional opportunities for young people with complex needs. An array of highly valued services are available in addition to respite care including overnights, Saturday club, outreach services and access to qualified social workers based on-site offering input if needed.</p> <p>Young people have great experiences when visiting the centre. The staff are an experienced group that have worked together for over 10 years. They are well acquainted with the young people and their needs, leading to the development of highly positive and nurturing relationships where young people are treated with respect and dignity.</p> <p>The majority of the young people have complex needs that make their ability to communicate difficult. The staff go to great lengths to obtain young people's views to ensure that they are pleased with the way that services are being delivered. The methods used include the picture exchange communication system (PECS) and the interpretation of body gestures and sounds, along with promoting the use of electronic communication devices like iPads. In addition, parents complete surveys on behalf of their children. A young person demonstrated how he uses an iPad to communicate with the encouragement of staff.</p> <p>The day-to-day care of the young people by their parents is very well supported by the service. Most young people have specific goals that have been set by professionals from education or health. Staff work closely with parents and other professionals to support young people to work towards their goals. Progress is reviewed regularly and new goals set when needed.</p> <p>Young people are sensitively introduced to the centre. They are invited for a dinner visit to familiarise themselves with the environment. An accessible welcome pack is given to families, which contains a DVD. As a result, young people settle quickly when visiting the centre. A parent said, 'The service is wonderful. I was initially reluctant to have overnights from a parental view, although X [young person] had attended Saturday club for three years, this was a step up we were not sure we could handle. The staff reassured us that we were ready and it has been the best decision we ever made.'</p> <p>A thorough preparation process is undertaken to ensure that young people enjoy their time in an organised and structured manner. Visits are scheduled in advance, ensuring that the right mix of young people are attending at the same time. Staff then meet before scheduled visits and make decisions such as one-to-one care assignments, sleeping room allocation and activities. On inspection, it was evident that young people have their needs met with extreme attention paid to them. They</p>	

smile, laugh and obtain comfort from staff.

The outreach programme provides valuable support to young people and their families. A member of staff will work with them at home or in the community, for example, to develop their independence skills by using public transport.

Staff are diligent in managing the medication for young people at the centre. Medication is reviewed, ensuring that it is the correct medication on record. It is then logged and stored. The staff engage with general practitioners to gain an understanding of any medication that is unfamiliar to them. This means that they are always aware of the impact of medication on young people. Administration of medication is always double-checked for accuracy.

Child and adolescent mental health services and social workers from the disability team maintain an office at the centre one day a week, offering on-site advice and guidance to the staff and parents. Referrals on behalf of young people can be promptly made and reviewed if necessary.

The staff are not responsible for the educational needs of the young people. However, excellent links have been established with the specialist school in the area attended by the majority of the young people. Information is often exchanged between the centre and school. A sessional worker from the centre has recently been working in the school full time, adding to the consistency in care for young people.

Many diverse activities are available for the young people to participate in while at the centre. They have the option to access the sensory room for stimulation, the soft area for active play, arts and crafts, books and use of electronic gadgets. The stairwell in the centre displays numerous photos taken from the vast number of trips that young people have attended. Some group trips have included swimming, nature walks and visits to farms.

Meals are freshly prepared by staff who take into account the preferences and dietary needs of the young people staying at the time. Some young people have learned to feed themselves with the assistance of staff and specialised dishes and cutlery. The kitchen is not accessed by young people, and without significant modification cannot be, although some would benefit from learning to cook. Managers agreed to explore refurbishment of the kitchen.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
Substantial measures are undertaken by the staff to ensure that the children are consistently protected and kept safe by the staff team when using any of the services attached to the centre. A parent said, 'Knowing my child was safe is the most important aspect of the service. As a parent of a child with a disability, I do	

not need worry if X is safe when with the staff. That is reassuring.’

The safeguarding policies are comprehensive, up to date and implemented in practice. The management has incorporated additional information pertaining to the protection of the young people with complex needs. Easy to follow flow charts containing procedures, and the details of the designated officer, are displayed. The staff continue to engage in meaningful training that allows them to be fully prepared and knowledgeable should any young person be placed at risk. No incidents of concern have needed to be reported to the designated officer for a considerable length of time nor does she have any concerns about the centre.

Young people have ‘opportunity assessments’ on file. Any potential issue that may place a young person at risk of harm has been considered within this. The document not only details how staff will manage and minimise the risk, it also provides guidance on behaviour management and how personal care needs will be met.

Behaviour management is meticulous and efficient. Staff use their knowledge of the young people to monitor and correct concerning behaviour. Reports are completed for all incidents. They are analysed to help understand the reasons leading to the incident and to develop strategies to manage similar incidents in the future.

Two new members of staff have been recruited since the last inspection. Any concerns that arise during the recruitment process are automatically subject to further scrutiny and no start date provided until a decision is made.

Health and safety checks including fire safety are completed with regularity. Specific detail is paid to assuring certification of specialised equipment used to care for young people such as the harnesses and lift, ensuring a safe handling environment.

The majority of the young people have comprehensive personal evacuation plans on record in case of a fire emergency. One young person, who uses a wheelchair and has used the service for over six months, did not have a procedure to be undertaken by staff to remove her from the premises if a fire occurred.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
<p>The centre has stable, consistent management which excels at ensuring the complex needs of young people are consistently met while developing the service further. The experienced registered manager displays a passion for the work and a great depth of knowledge of young people with disabilities. The staff respect the manner in which he leads and speak positively about their interactions with him. The two deputy managers complete the management team. They are equally</p>	

competent and draw on substantial experience.

Extensive management overview means that managers are familiar with all the young people that use any of the services available. Managers prioritise the needs of the young people and are actively involved in their care. They assess individual cases and ensure that the right level of support is being provided. An excellent example was the young person referred for overnight care. After unpicking the information and meeting with the family on numerous occasions, purposeful advice on management of sleep disorder was offered, with which the parents no longer felt respite care was needed.

The independent visitor has consistently visited the centre on a monthly basis and files a report with management and Ofsted in a timely manner. The information contained in the reports submitted since the last inspection read as complacent and rarely suggested areas of improvement. The manager agrees that the reports have become slightly weak and creative thinking needs to be undertaken when carrying out the visits.

Internal monitoring is rigorous. The manager identifies strengths and areas of improvement then incorporates this information into a forward thinking, comprehensive report that serves as an effective tool that drives the service to continuously function at a high level. The annual report is broken down into three areas: the current situation, improvement required and how it will affect the young people.

The staff team members have worked together for many years and speak highly of the support that they receive in relation to their assigned roles within the service. They believe that the training is extensive, allowing them to develop and excel in their ability to care for the young people. All the permanent members of staff have the appropriate qualification to work in the home.

Supervision is held regularly and with a purpose, allowing staff to engage in informal discussions with management about their allocated placements, their well-being and practice development. Any practice-related issues are addressed discreetly with the goal of improvement without alienating staff. A member of staff said that their experience was of being treated fairly and given tremendous support that led to improvements in the way that they worked with the young people.

An impeccable reputation has been established within the community by the service due to working hard on behalf of young people and their families. The staff have exceptional engagement with other professionals and families due to their effective links within the council that ensures young people benefit from additional resources and services in the community when needed.

Managers address all complaints promptly and fairly, providing speedy resolution. The parent of a young person praised the manner in which the manager handled her low-level complaint regarding her son. The parent said, 'Despite my concern being a small one, the manager was very attentive and sympathetic. He listened to me and provided me [with] reassurance by looking into the matter and providing immediate feedback. The final outcome was placed in writing and I was pleased

with the outcome.'

The service goes over and beyond the ethos as described in the statement of purpose, continually evolving and implementing new ideas.

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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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

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