

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	22/09/2016
Unique reference number	1226266
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Kingdom Care Children's Homes Limited
Registered provider address	30-34 North Street, Hailsham, East Sussex, BN27 1DW

Responsible individual	Amanda Pollard
Registered manager	Linda Palfrey
Inspector	Keith Riley

Inspection date	22/09/2016
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

1226266

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- An experienced and competent manager is showing good leadership.
- Young people are forming warm, trusting relationships with staff.
- There is a good mix of staff of both genders.
- Young people are making progress and reducing their risk-taking behaviour.
- Staff advocate for young people and challenge other professional's practice when necessary.
- Young people have easy access to the home's clinical psychologist and therapy services.
- Young people have a strong, clear voice in the home. Staff listen to young people and value their opinion.
- Staff actively pursue appropriate education placements. Young people are engaging in their learning.
- Staff morale is high. They feel well trained and supported. They are committed to meet the individual needs of the young people that they care for.

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
Notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious, this especially applies to the disclosure and barring service. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))	30/12/2016
Ensure that the quality of care review includes any actions the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (2)(c))	30/12/2016

Recommendations

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

- Continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them, especially to review the content of mobile phone agreements. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', paragraph 9.5, page 42)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The setting registered in January 2016 to provide care and accommodation for up to six female young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties. This is the first inspection since registration. A private organisation runs the home. At the point of making referrals, placing social workers consider young people to be at risk of child sexual exploitation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
N/A		

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
<p>Young people benefit from staff who empathise with their life story and understand their emotional distress. They relate well to their key worker and speak to them about their painful emotions. They seek out hugs and benefit from appropriate touch. A young person said, 'They all support me and know me better than anyone else.' Another young person said that her key worker is, 'Friendly, nice, supportive and understanding.'</p> <p>Young people have easy access to the home's psychologist who establishes clinical baseline measurements. She organises therapy that the young person feels comfortable with, such as bereavement counselling or psychotherapy as required. She is actively involved in the home's referral and admissions processes. She chairs regular child-focused meetings where the underlying psychological reasons for behaviour are discussed and the strategies to best support young people.</p> <p>Staff support young people in their education. Staff encourage young people to attend school, college or other educational establishments. Young people respond well and are able to gain qualifications, such as English GCSE. They gain a college placement of their choice, such as in construction. Two placing authorities invited two different young people to attend award ceremonies to celebrate their achievements. Staff supported young people to buy special outfits to dress for the event. Young people feel proud of the progress that they have made and the recognition by others.</p> <p>Staff further encourage young people's learning and work experience, through participation in the national citizenship scheme or working as a volunteer within a job sector where they have shown some interest. The home encourages young people to develop a social conscience and to think about the needs of others. Young people use the home's 'charity tree' to decide how they will support such causes. Maintenance staff support young people's other interests within the home, for example by making a workbench in the garage for a young person to build a bicycle.</p> <p>Young people have a voice in this home. They enjoy regular dialogue with staff, who also seek their views more formally through a range of questionnaires. Young people access the complaints procedure if necessary. Recently, they have said how they would like to further personalise their bedrooms and there are plans to meet their individual, creative requirements. Young people are able to keep a range of pets, such as guinea pigs, rabbits and hamsters. They speak fondly of taking care and of petting their animals. A young person said, 'Being here is so much better than I thought it would be.'</p> <p>Young people begin to feel safe, secure and cared for. They form good</p>	

attachments with staff and have less desire to go missing from care. A placing social worker said, 'They have worked well with (name of young person). They have met her emotional needs so she is less likely to go missing.' Young people's self-esteem improves and they begin to take a pride in their personal appearance. Criminal offending is reducing. A youth offending professional said, '(name of young person) has made amazing progress since being there and is keeping out of the court system.' A member of staff said, about another young person, 'She has come on in leaps and bounds. She is not absconding, has matured, is helpful and has now started college.' For some young people, their violent behaviour has not diminished and their placement has ended. There have been three such events since the home opened, with two placements terminated by the registered manager.

On occasion, there is conflict between young people. Staff are trained in anti-bullying techniques and are aware of the policy. They intervene and use a restorative justice approach. Young people's relationships are repaired as they learn about emotions, the impact on others and socially acceptable behaviour.

The registered manager has recognised the need to improve arrangements for physical health. When the immunisation status of young people is not known, this is chased. The majority of the young people smoke cigarettes and they are not currently engaging with the range of anti-smoking strategies available to them. The registered manager has worked with local shops to stop the supply of cigarettes to young people. One young person who was refusing to attend dental appointments has started to engage with a specialist provision. The misuse of substances is decreasing. Staff fully support young people to attend the sexual health clinic. The registered manager has recently introduced health passports to identify the issues, with strategies to improve health.

Young people enjoy a wide range of activities. They join local groups such as scouts and army cadets. They enjoy sports such as canoeing, squash or rugby. Staff ensure that young people have access to a coach if young people want extra guidance. Staff support young people to pursue their dreams, such as arranging singing lessons prior to a national singing competition. Staff are unreservedly committed to meet the young people's needs, coming in to support on their day off if young people request a specific member of staff.

Staff fully support young people to see parents, relatives and other individuals who are important to them. Some young people travel independently by public transport to visit family members, often staying overnight. Staff are committed to ensure that young people can go to significant family events, in one case driving a considerable distance so that a young person could attend. In some cases, staff provide supervised contact within the home environment.

Young people live in a safe environment. All necessary health and safety checks are in place. The registered manager checks staff driving licences and any historical driving offences before allowing them to drive young people in the home's vehicle. The decor and furnishings are of a high standard and there is no damage.

Young people benefit from learning independent living skills. They learn how to manage a bank account and to cook. Some young people use public transport to go and visit friends.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Young people speak positively of their relationship with their key worker. Young people feel that they can rely on someone that they trust to listen to them. They know that staff care about how they feel, especially when they are upset. The adults around them take what they say seriously and help young people to work through their difficult and painful emotions. Young people are engaged with other professionals so they can access the professional therapy most appropriate for them.</p> <p>Staff are aware of the vulnerabilities and risks of sexual exploitation, especially when young people go missing from care. Some young people elect to go to areas where they place themselves at risk. Staff diligently follow the agreed protocols, including following the young people and attempting to persuade them to come home. A placing social worker said, 'Staff are attuned to her cues when she wants to run and redirect her successfully.' Staff report episodes of going missing to the police and seek their support when necessary. The number of episodes has decreased in recent months. Staff ensure that there are risk assessments in place. They teach young people about appropriate relationships and how to recognise when they are being exploited. Staff, with other professionals, have successfully disrupted a relationship with an inappropriate individual.</p> <p>All young people have access to a mobile phone. Benefits include the staff maintaining contact with young people when they are away from the home, particularly if they go missing. Staff fully recognise that the young people need guidance and support to use their phones safely; hence, all of the young people sign a mobile phone agreement. Currently, these documents focus on the rights of staff rather than on the responsibilities of the young people. For example, there is a lack of clarity on how conversations may be monitored, the use of mobile phones at night, which apps are permitted or expectations about privacy settings. A review of these agreements, in line with individual needs is recommended to ensure all parties are clear about expectations.</p> <p>Some young people misuse substances. Some engage with the substance misuse team and show a reduction in such behaviour. Staff search bedrooms if they are suspicious that a young person is hiding an illegal substance. They involve the police if necessary.</p> <p>Experienced behaviour management trainers teach staff in behaviour management practice. Staff successfully use de-escalation techniques and only use physical</p>	

intervention as a last resort. They record any incidents for the registered manager to review. Young people have the opportunity to reflect on incidents, thereby reducing the potential for recurrence.

Staff are conversant with child protection procedures. They follow the comprehensive procedure in the event of a disclosure or a concern. The registered manager consults with the designated officer for safeguarding in the local authority if necessary, for example in the event of an allegation. She works with others, including the police, to conclude matters, keeping everyone safe while the required investigations take place.

Key staff adopt safer recruitment practice. They ensure that the necessary checks are in place prior to appointment. In one case, they had only tracked employment history back for the last 10 years. This is the home's policy but is not in full accordance with the regulations.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>The registered manager is qualified to the level 5 diploma and has a vast range of experience. She has been successful in recruiting a diverse staff team. They have a range of qualifications and experience with more junior staff afforded appropriate support and guidance. New staff speak positively of the induction process. They say that there are sufficient qualified and experienced staff around to guide them if necessary. The registered manager has a comprehensive training plan and identifies the personal development of each member of staff.</p> <p>The registered manager works well with other agencies, for example the youth offending team. Professionals report that the registered manager communicates well orally and in writing, exchanging information when necessary. She chases placing authorities to put pathway plans into place by a young person's 16th birthday. She challenges short-term funding arrangements and seeks to establish the plan for a permanent placement. She notifies significant events in accordance with statutory regulations. However, in one case, she has not made a referral to the disclosure and barring service.</p> <p>Staff speak positively of the registered manager and the support that they get through their line management structure, through both regular, formal supervision and the 'open door' policy when they can access the manager at any time. Staff can also access the home's psychologist if they feel that they need clinical supervision. This is a home that recognises the emotional impact on staff of the work that they do on a daily basis. Staff also speak well of the peer support in their team. They work well together to support each other and be in a good emotional space themselves to provide the best possible care for young people who have suffered emotional trauma.</p>	

Staff work successfully with the wider community. They build bridges with local youth groups and sports groups. Young people pursue the hobby of their choice.

The registered manager has good monitoring systems in place. She takes the views of the independent visitor very seriously and acts on any recommendations. She reflects on practice and provides a six-monthly report to Ofsted in accordance with the regulations. The first report does not include any actions to maintain or improve the quality of care for young people. However, she does have a written development plan in place with good detail. The registered manager recognised the need to improve the referral process following the discharge of three young people since the home opened. The process asks searching questions to gather as much information about a potential admission. The registered manager considers the impact on others living in the home.

A placing social worker said, 'The registered manager is balanced and sees the bigger picture.' Another professional said, 'The registered manager is professional and very experienced and this is reflected in her staff.' A parent said that the communication is open and honest, with a willingness to discuss resolution of issues in a caring way.

The registered manager maintains the home to a high standard. She deploys maintenance staff to attend to any repairs quickly. Young people have a sense of identity and belonging.

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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