

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	23/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC408714
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Able Health Care Limited
Registered provider address	45 Wolsey Road, Northwood, Middlesex HA6 2ER

Responsible individual	Aruna Kukadia
Registered manager	Thomas Thurlow
Inspector	Joanna Heller

Inspection date	23/02/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection	
<p>This home was judged as good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.</p> <p>At the last inspection, one requirement and one recommendation were set in relation to the availability of information regarding the home and the quality of the environment. The manager has not forwarded to Ofsted a copy of the current statement of purpose or uploaded this to the organisation's website as required by regulation. While easy accessibility of information is important for all interested parties, this does not have any direct or potential impact for the children, as they receive suitable information and where possible visit the home before placement.</p> <p>The building is a spacious detached house, and the children enjoy generous living space. They particularly enjoy their time spent in the studio writing and creating song lyrics. The building has been subject to regular damage. While maintenance and decorative works have been carried out since the last inspection, some areas continue to require improvement to provide high-quality accommodation. For example, some holes in walls have been filled but not painted, and the lounge carpet has a large tear. One child expressed concern that people walking past can see straight into the lounge which had an impact on their privacy. The well-equipped kitchen is a spacious social hub in which the children make themselves snacks as they choose and enjoy sociable mealtimes together with staff. However, food is not always stored in a hygienic way that protects the children and staff from consuming contaminated food. For example, raw meat was stored on top of items which would not be cooked before eating.</p> <p>The manager continues to prioritise the needs of the children effectively, ensuring that they receive high-quality care and support which meets their individual needs. The manager ensures that all placements are well planned. He assesses the needs of all the children and the potential impact that changes will have on the group dynamics. As a result, the children enjoy a stable home where few placement breakdowns occur. The manager provides good support so that the children move on in a planned way. All relevant information is shared, which facilitates future care planning. When the children move on to independent living or return to the family home, outreach support is available to help them successfully make the transition.</p> <p>As a result of the good support and guidance that the children receive, they all</p>	

make strong progress across all aspects of their lives. The children speak very positively about the home. Their comments include:

- 'It feels like home. It's a really nice place to live.'
- 'It's a really good place to be.'
- 'It's all right, actually, it's pretty good.'

The secure base model permeates effectively through the home. Strong relationships with mutual trust and understanding are built, and there is a calm, relaxed atmosphere within the home. One social worker said that 'Staff go above and beyond, they do more than most parents would. They recognise him as he is and work with what they've got.' The children, as a result, are all making good progress in their self-regulation, which builds their confidence and self-esteem. One parent said, 'He is a completely different boy, he has really matured and grown up. He is now much calmer and is able to express himself better.' The children are justly proud of their progress. They reflect on their increasing maturity and emotional resilience in the daily house meetings, which offer them the opportunity to recognise and celebrate their many achievements.

The systems to promote positive behaviour are successful, and as a result, physical intervention is now rarely used. The children value the consistency and clarity of boundaries and the emotional availability of the staff. They say that the staff are the best thing about the home. One said, 'I love the staff. They do what they say they will do and don't let us down.' One parent described how their child has a really positive relationship with all of the staff. They said, 'He feels they are there for him come hell or high water.' They also said, 'He adores 'X' [member of staff], he really does. He always says he can talk to him about anything. When I ask him why he has such a go him sometimes, he says 'because I love him so much.'

The children are encouraged to maintain a healthy lifestyle and receive suitable guidance on how to maintain positive personal relationships. Despite the good guidance and the support that the children receive, they continue to smoke and occasionally access cannabis. However, the frequency of this has greatly reduced. The staff work well with partner agencies, such as youth offending teams, to address such issues.

Learning and development are well promoted. All of the children were highly resistant to engaging in education prior to placement, but those of compulsory school age now maintain regular attendance and are progressing well from their starting points. Those children who have reached the age of 16 are supported to develop curricula vitae and to seek suitable educational or work experience placements that meet their particular needs and interests; for example, working with animals or undertaking a Prince's Trust programme.

The children enjoy a wide range of new opportunities, such as mixing and writing music, cooking, skateboarding and the regular favourite of trampolining. Some have also enjoyed a holiday with staff. They make good progress in relation to

developing their skills in preparation for adulthood and enjoy the opportunities to make positive friendships with their peers, sometimes for the first time.

There have been no complaints about the home, and any significant incidents are well managed. There have been no incidents of going missing from home, or concerns regarding child sexual exploitation or offending behaviour. Risk management is effective, and the children are supported to take appropriate risks according to their age and understanding. One social worker said, 'There's an excellent response to helping him take measured risks. They are not risk-averse but help him take those next steps.'

The staff develop good partnership working with families and promote and maintain contact. One parent said, 'They've always been really good.' Placing authorities and partner professionals speak very positively about the staff and the difference that the home is making. One said, 'Staff go out of their way to support young people. They make a real difference and help young people successfully change.' These professionals hold the service in very high esteem, and one said that 'The home is absolutely brilliant.' Another said, 'They're probably the best home I have ever worked with.' These positive relationships underline the really strong and effective partnerships with other agencies which promote a strong sense of wraparound support for the children.

There are effective internal and external monitoring arrangements that enable the manager to have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for growth for the service. While the manager has been asked to make some improvements, these shortfalls do not affect the children or undermine the consistently high-quality care that they receive. One of the children summed up their thoughts about the home as, 'I like everything about it. It's peng!' One social worker said, 'There is a real sense of family. He's experiencing a sense of home and family for the first time. It's been life-changing.'

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned. It is registered to look after a maximum of six children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. There are education facilities within the grounds of the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/11/2016	Full	Good
18/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
18/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/05/2014	Full	Good

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
The registered person must keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. If a home has a website, the registered person must ensure that a copy of the statement of purpose is published on that website unless the registered person considers that such publication would prejudice the welfare of children in the home. (Regulation 16 (3)(b)(4))	31/03/2017

Recommendations

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

- Provide a homely, domestic environment which complies with relevant health and safety legislations. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.9)

In particular, ensure that food storage arrangements promote the welfare of the children. Furthermore, ensure that the furniture and fittings and decor are of a high standard throughout.

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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