

1231458

Registered provider: Sherlock Healthcare Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This service is a private children's home offering care and accommodation for up to three young people who have emotional and/or behavioural problems.

Inspection dates: 25 to 26 April 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 25 October 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people receive highly individualised care from a dedicated and committed staff team.
- Staff work very well together to meet young people's needs.
- In relation to young people's starting points, they are making good progress in

all areas of their development.

- Young people develop good, nurturing relationships with staff, which underpin the good quality care.
- Leadership and management of the home are outstanding. High standards of practice are maintained.
- Young people's safety and welfare are prioritised at all times.
- Managers and staff work in close partnership with professionals and families, resulting in young people receiving good quality, integrated care.
- Young people are positive about their experiences at the home. They enjoy their day-to-day lives.
- Professionals gave uniformly positive feedback about the service.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The large rear garden could be enhanced for the benefit of the young people living at the home.
- The young people's guide requires updating in line with the statement of purpose.
- The children's guide may not be accessible to all young people in its current format.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/10/2016	Full	Good

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Ensure that young people live in an environment which meets their basic day-to-day needs. In particular, enhance the garden area for the benefit of the young people living at the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)
- Ensure that the children's guide is age-appropriate, provided in an accessible format and explained to each child to make sure that they understand it. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.20)
- Ensure that when reviewing and revising the statement of purpose (regulation 16 (3)(a)), the registered person should review and update the children's guide as necessary, and make sure that children are given an explanation of any changes. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.23)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people make good progress in their lives, as they benefit from well-planned care that is closely monitored. Managers and staff focus on the needs of the young people in their care, and the service that young people receive from staff is flexible and responds to their changing needs. Staff ensure that young people are safe and well, while at the same time making sure that each young person has a good quality day-to-day life. Staff prioritise making positive and nurturing relationships with young people. Staff take time to understand young people's current and emerging needs and are creative in their approaches to ensure that young people benefit. Staff capture young people's enthusiasm and develop innovative ways to meet their needs. This includes role-play. Consequently, young people's self-esteem and self-confidence grows as they recognise and celebrate their achievements.

All young people attend school full time, and they receive help and support with homework and in planning for the next steps in their careers. A teacher told the inspector, 'Since living at the home, the young person is much more aware of her potential and more socially aware.' A young person said, in relation to leaving school, 'I am excited, but nervous. I know staff are there for me.' Staff liaise closely with school staff so that essential information about young people's needs is appropriately shared. Adults are able to support young people with particular challenges. A teacher told the inspector, 'Staff tell us about anything that may potentially interfere with her learning, and we work out a strategy.'

Young people's health needs are comprehensively met. They are encouraged and helped to develop healthy lifestyles. Menus are full of freshly cooked and nutritious meals, reflecting young people's choices. Exercise and an active lifestyle are keenly promoted and young people enjoy a wide range of fun and stimulating activities, including sport, walks, swimming, cinema and days out. A parent commented, 'My child has come on leaps and bounds since living there, particularly with self-confidence.' A young person told the inspector, 'I do a lot of fun things; there is always something to do here.' Another said, 'The staff make me really happy.'

A key strength of the home is the relationships between staff and young people. All young people are treated with dignity and respect, and there is genuine warmth and affection between young people and staff. A social worker commented, 'Staff go above and beyond. I cannot fault them.' The home has a welcoming, calm and homely atmosphere. Young people sit around the table with staff for meals and reflect on their day, and join in lively discussions. Staff are attuned to changes in young people's presentations and behaviour, and any issues arising are followed through in one-to-one discussions with young people, ensuring that they have all the support they need.

Young people's voices and choices are evident throughout the organisation of the home. Young people contribute to menu planning, activities, decoration and presentation of the

house. One of the displays was recently changed as a result of young people telling staff that the language used on the equalities and diversity board was not meaningful to them, and changing the language made the discussions more accessible. In addition, the format of young people's meetings has changed, with the aim of strengthening young people's voices and participation. Young people help with minute-taking, choose topics and festivals to celebrate and they join in discussions about local or world events. Young people's citizenship skills are expanded as they develop a view of the wider society.

Young people learn valuable life skills and age-appropriate semi-independence skills. Young people's enthusiasm is bolstered by staff, and one young person said, 'I am about to start going out on my own. I feel excited.' All young people help with chores, including washing-up, laying tables and keeping their rooms tidy. Others practise life skills, such as shopping, learning about money, budgeting and increasing their self-care skills. Consequently, young people feel more prepared as they move towards independent living.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Young people become increasingly safe while living at the home. Staff work in close partnership with young people, professionals and families to assess and evaluate any risks. This comprehensive approach enables young people to begin to take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour. Young people begin to develop reflective skills and use these to adapt and manage their responses. Young people begin to understand expectations of safe and socially acceptable behaviour, and may take time out on their own if their emotions escalate.

The registered manager carefully assesses any potential new young person for a vacancy at the home. Her priority is the stability and safety of all young people, and she analyses the needs of current young people with those of potential new young people to ensure that their progress is not destabilised. Young people are prepared for a new arrival, and staff are vigilant about any changes in their behaviour which may indicate difficulties.

Since the last inspection, there have not been any instances of young people going missing or being absent from the home without permission. Staff are tenacious in respect of promoting young people's safety. All staff have training in understanding the indicators of child sexual exploitation and radicalisation. Staff are alert to any changes and know how to respond if the need arises. Young people are involved in discussions with staff about their safety, and regular one-to-one discussions with staff reinforce and underpin their safety. Staff employ various resources, such as scenarios and discussions, with young people to educate them and raise their awareness of risks, such as exploitation. While staff are highly attuned to these risks, they balance this with encouraging young people to develop the necessary skills to take a full part in the community.

Staff are skilled in de-escalation techniques. Since the last inspection, there have not been any incidents of physical intervention. Staff relationships with, and observations of,

young people mean that they recognise when behaviour is changing, or a young person is becoming agitated. Staff step in and gently distract and divert the young person's attention to another activity or topic of conversation. Young people feel supported and secure, as they know that adults will help them if they are becoming distressed. Positive behaviour is reinforced by a rewards system, with which young people are fully engaged. This allows them to earn rewards, such as a voucher or toy, in response to a set target. Young people have a real sense of achievement and pride when they gain their rewards.

Managers ensure that the home is well maintained, and regular checks are undertaken of electrical, gas and fire equipment. In addition, fire drills take place in line with organisational requirements, and all young people are prepared and knowledgeable about the reasons why these take place. Staff are vigilant about any defects in the home, and ensure that these are swiftly repaired. This promotes a sense of pride in the home and helps young people to respect their surroundings.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager has been in post since the home opened in May 2016. She is appropriately qualified and has a national vocational qualification level 4 in leadership and management of residential care services, which she obtained in 2012. The registered manager provides outstanding and inspirational leadership in all aspects of the home's running. She strives to continually improve and develop the service for young people's benefit. She vigorously promotes the welfare of each young person in her care and staff reflect her determination and energy.

The registered manager has an excellent understanding of the quality of care in the home. Records are superbly maintained, and any omissions are speedily followed up with other agencies, ensuring that staff have all the updated and relevant information they need to meet young people's needs. Due to the registered manager's exceptional diligence, she continues to promote the aims and objectives of the service, as reflected in the home's statement of purpose. The registered manager constantly seeks relevant tools, research and resources for young people and staff to promote young people's welfare. For example, the registered manager has provided books and games that are educative and also fun, such as the time game, Emotionary – helping young people understand and recognise their emotions – and NSPCC resources focusing on the mental health of young people. Staff have also watched Kayleigh's story, about child sexual exploitation. The staff team also has consultations with the organisation's psychologist with the aim of promoting and developing the service further.

Managers and staff have the needs and welfare of the young people at the centre of everything they do at the home. The registered manager leads a committed, thoughtful and reflective team which wants the very best for each of the young people, and whose members continually strive to break down boundaries that young people face, whether this is in education, their emotional health or social relationships. The registered manager and staff will challenge other agencies when information is not available and escalate their concerns when necessary. Managers and staff are tireless in identifying suitable activities and other resources which will enrich the lives of young people. For

example, one young person now has karate lessons, another is being linked to an independent visitor, and another now has the confidence to go on a national citizenship service residential project. Young people's horizons and experiences are extended as a result of living at the home.

Staff benefit from a comprehensive range of training opportunities, and the registered manager is exceptionally committed to the development of staff practice so that they provide the highest quality of care to young people. All staff have obtained the diploma level 3 in residential childcare, are undertaking it, or will start the course when they have completed their probationary period. This means that staff develop the necessary skills and abilities to meet the needs of young people. All staff receive regular supervision and one said to the inspector, 'Supervision sessions are really helpful, and it makes me think deeply about how I can improve things for the young people.' Theoretical learning and reflective practice underpin the supervision.

The registered manager has an excellent understanding of the impact of the quality of care in the home. She works constructively with the independent visitor, and the registered manager's monitoring is thorough and constantly evaluates staff practice and young people's progress. Consequently, young people's development improves from their starting points. The registered manager has a first-rate understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the home. Current development plans include improving the garden area to make it a more enriched environment for young people, further developing the nurturing practice of staff and equipping them with the necessary skills to undertake life-story work with young people.

The registered manager promotes an ethos of tolerance and respect for all. She vigilantly promotes young people's diverse needs, whether that concerns, for example, religious and cultural needs, disability, or young people's preferences and communication needs. One aspect of improvement identified at this inspection was that the children's guide, although improved, may still not be accessible to the needs of all young people in the home. The registered manager is working with young people and staff to consider ways of improving this. Young people have contributed ideas, for example suggesting that they can contribute text about their experiences of living at the home, and in this way they feel involved in developing the service for others. In addition, the statement of purpose was recently reviewed and the children's guide needs amending to reflect these changes.

At the last inspection, one requirement and three recommendations were made. These have all been met. The area of uneven ground in the garden has been repaired. All staff have received anti-radicalisation training, improving their knowledge and understanding of this issue. The location risk assessment is reviewed annually, when new young people arrive at the home and if new information is forwarded to the home by police or other agencies. Staff are knowledgeable about what to do if they observe a member of staff abusing their position to the detriment of the safety of a child, improving the overall safety of all young people in the home.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1231458

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sherlock Healthcare Services Ltd

Registered provider address: 20-22 Wenlock Road, London N1 7GU

Responsible individual: Susan Rai

Registered manager: Susan Rai

Inspector

Julia Wright, social care inspector

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