

1183173

Registered provider: TLC Youth Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and is registered to provide care and accommodation for three children who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 2 to 3 May 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 **good**

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

Date of last inspection: 4 January 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because

- Highly effective management oversight and direction ensure that children receive well-planned care.
- Children who have experienced numerous difficulties in previous care

placements have settled, have built positive relationships with staff and are making good progress.

- Safeguarding concerns are addressed promptly and appropriately, effectively protecting children.
- The staff are very enthusiastic and strive to always provide a high quality of care.
- A particular strength of the service is the planning and work undertaken with children to promote their independence and improve their self-confidence.
- Staff manage behaviour effectively and support children to start to regulate their own behaviours.
- No breaches of children's home's regulations have been identified.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
25/04/2016	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The good quality of care and support offers children a very positive care experience. They know that their individuality is recognised and they feel listened to. Staff know each child well and understand their differing support needs. This means that children feel valued and relaxed, enabling them to benefit from the care that they receive.

While there have been some placement breakdowns, most children experience settled care and are making good progress. It is evident that managers carefully consider the impact of emerging concerns on each child before making a decision to serve notice on a placement. The social worker for a child who recently left the home said, 'Despite the fact that [child] had to leave, I have a very positive view of the service. They are a placement that goes above and beyond for their young people.'

Children have excellent relationships with staff; this contributes to their sense of well-being. One child spoke about how he chooses to spend his free time with staff. Comments from children included, 'I really like the atmosphere here, and it's really relaxed. I also like having fun, joking around with the staff.'

Children are generally in good health. Staff endeavour to take every opportunity to educate children about their health. Children who smoke are encouraged to stop and are provided with health education and appropriate guidance. Staff work tirelessly to ensure that children attend necessary health appointments. If children decline, staff will rearrange the appointment and talk to them about how best to manage their health needs. Staff are mindful of children's emotional well-being and monitor their moods and behaviours closely. Referrals are made when required for access to a mental health professional. Children understand that healthy eating is important to good health and are encouraged to make healthy choices. Physical activity is encouraged and successes are recognised. For example, a range of certificates are on display in the home acknowledging success on a 10-mile cycle ride and swimming achievements.

Attendance and achievement within education are seen as important. Staff work alongside involved professionals to identify appropriate educational resources. An education professional said, 'The staff have been exceptional in the way they have supported [child] to attend college.' Children are encouraged to develop aspirations for the future, to look at different choices and to find appropriate further education options or employment. As a result, current residents are either employed or have a current school placement and college courses arranged to commence in the autumn term.

Staff practice is held in high regard by involved professionals and parents. Comments included, 'They are very good at keeping me up to date, and are very organised', and, 'Staff are brilliant.' Parents say they have very positive relationships with staff and managers and confirm that family visits are well supported; this includes support with transport arrangements when children have a long distance to travel home.

A particular strength is the effectiveness of preparation for children to live independently. The team has developed a workbook of 'fifty things to do before I leave'. This system promotes the development of new skills and knowledge and is an area of care that children say they particularly enjoy and look forward to. Examples include changing a light bulb or electric plug, budgeting, laundry tasks and use of public transport. A child who is shortly to move into semi-independent accommodation says that he feels well prepared and very confident with regard to this transition.

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

Children feel safe and are confident to speak to staff if they felt concerned about their care. They know that the staff prioritise their safety and well-being. For example, staff keep in contact with them when they are away from the home.

Children's welfare and safety are consistently promoted. Staff understand the risks and potential hazards for each child and follow detailed risk management strategies to promote their safety and well-being. Safeguarding issues are identified promptly and are acted upon in line with local and national guidelines. Staff also work directly with children to help them to understand potential hazards; this includes supporting them to make positive choices in relation to their personal safety. This has contributed to children becoming increasingly safer. For example, one young person is managing routines and following boundaries in a much improved way. Involved professionals refer to children becoming notably safer after settling into long-term placements, following periods of instability and placement moves.

Good behaviour-management strategies are helping children to make desired changes and to become more self-aware with regard to the impact of their behaviours. Children know what is expected of them and it is noted that they generally follow the routines and boundaries. While sanctions are at times used, staff adopt positive reinforcement as a key tool to encourage children towards preferred behaviours. A strength in this area is the existence of very positive relationships between staff and children; also, the time staff spend talking to children is highly beneficial.

There is a proactive response when children are found to be absent without authority, or if they are established as missing, after appropriate checks have been made by staff. Staff understand and act on their responsibilities in working alongside external professionals and family members to ensure children's safe return to the home.

Careful recruitment of staff prevents unsuitable people from being recruited and having the opportunity to harm children.

A safe and well-maintained living environment protects children from harm. Environmental risk management strategies are very broad, are kept under review and are updated as and when required.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The service is led effectively by an experienced and appropriately qualified registered manager. The named responsible individual for the organisation is based at the home and is very much part of the management team. Managers have high expectations for the quality of care to be provided and together drive forward service development. Managers maintain a close oversight of the service and ensure that the home is achieving its stated aims and objectives.

Managers understand the progress each child is making and monitor the development, review and implementation of well-structured placement plans. This means that each member of staff knows how best to provide individualised care and support. Children's contribution is valued and encouraged. House meetings, key-work time and a listening culture promote opportunities for children to have their say and to contribute to care arrangements. External engagement opportunities include children attending a local authority youth group operated by the Children's Rights team and being part of the Children in Care Council. As a result, children feel involved and listened to.

The staff have confidence in their managers and say that they feel supported in their roles. Comments from staff included, 'The team works really well together' and 'I am very happy working here.' The caring and supportive working environment impacts positively on staff, which in turn creates a warm and nurturing care atmosphere for children.

The home is properly staffed and resourced to meet the needs of the service. Staff are competent and knowledgeable and understand their roles and responsibilities. This is because of the priority given to staff development opportunities. This starts with induction training and leads into a core training programme. Learning and development all link to the required level 3 diploma for residential childcare qualification. Managers ensure that learning needs relate to the specific needs of children using the service. Managers have recently initiated development strategies within team meetings. This includes senior staff preparing and presenting learning materials to the team. This demonstrates the emphasis placed on service development.

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: 1183173

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: TLC Youth Care Limited

Registered provider address: 19 Harrier Park, Northampton, NN4 0QG

Responsible individual: Duncan MacKenzie

Registered manager: Joseph Monaghan

Inspector

Mary Timms: social care inspector

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