

1227330

Registered provider: Positive Outcomes Childcare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for three young people up to the age of 18. The home offers care for young people who have behavioural and/or emotional needs. The home is privately owned.

Inspection dates: 23 to 24 May 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	Good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 24 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 make good progress in all areas of their development since living at the home.
- Young people enjoy warm, trusting and supportive relationships with staff, which help to support their progress.
- Young people engage in a wide range of leisure pursuits and activities.
- The registered manager strives to improve and develop the service in the best interest of the young people.
- Staff make sure that the home environment is warm, welcoming and homely.
- Staff ensure that young people's views are taken into account in the development of the home.

The children's home's areas for development

- Staff do not have the necessary knowledge of equality and diversity issues, the 'Prevent' duty and online safety, to help young people to prepare for their future lives in society.
- Young people's case records sometimes do not include copies of the placing authority's plans.
- Employment checks are not always completed prior to staff commencing employment.
- The registered manager has not ensured that the home's rota includes the names and times of all staff working with young people.
- Young people are not in full-time education or engaged in suitable structured activities that help to counter barriers to learning.
- Staff do not have the relevant skills, knowledge and creativity to be able to meet young people's health and development needs.
- The registered manager has not made sure that the home's safeguarding policy makes sufficient reference to all the required areas of safeguarding provision.
- Staffing levels are occasionally insufficient to provide adequate support to young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/10/2016	Full	Good

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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 ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development. This is in relation to training to raise awareness of equality and diversity, the 'Prevent' duty and online safety. (Regulation 33(4)(a))	02/10/2017
The registered person must ensure that records include a copy of any plan for the care of the child, prepared by the child's placing authority, and of the placement plan. (Regulation 36 Schedule 3 (19))	28/07/17
The registered person must ensure that a copy of the staff duty roster of persons working at the home and a record of the actual rosters worked are maintained in the home. (Regulation 37 Schedule 4 (3))	28/07/17

Recommendations

- Ensure that when children are placed in a home and are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, the registered person and staff work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. If no education place is identified by the placing authority, the registered person must challenge the authority to meet the child's needs under regulation 5 (engaging with the wider system to ensure that children's needs are met). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', p 28, paragraph 5.15)
- Ensure that the registered person ensures that, in line with their individual health plans and the ethos of the home, children are offered advice, support and guidance on health and well-being to enhance and supplement that provided by their school through personal, social and health education (PSHE). Staff should have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to help children understand and, where necessary, work to change negative behaviours in key areas of health and well-being such as, but not limited to, nutrition and healthy diet, exercise,

mental health, sexual relationships, sexual health, contraception and use of legal highs, drugs, alcohol and tobacco. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', p 34, paragraph 7.10)

- Ensure that the resigned person follows the specific responsibilities under regulation 34, to prepare and implement policies setting out: arrangements for the safeguarding of children from abuse or neglect; clear procedures for referring child protection concerns to the placing authority or local authority where the home is situated if appropriate; and specific procedures to prevent children going missing and take action if they do. The policy on protection of children from abuse and neglect should include arrangements in relation to dealing with allegations involving staff in the home and e-safety and to counter risks of self-harm and suicide. All policies should be reviewed regularly and revised where appropriate. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', p 44, paragraph 9.19)
- Ensure that the registered person plans staffing levels to ensure that they meet the needs of children and can respond flexibly to unexpected events or opportunities. Staffing structures should promote continuity of care from the child's perspective. If children complain, or give a view on how the staffing structure could be improved to promote the best care for them, appropriate action should be taken. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', p 54, paragraph 10.15)
- Ensure that the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

A motivated staff team knows the young people well and tries hard to meet young people's individual needs. The staff work hard to make sure that their relationships with young people are positive, nurturing and supportive. Young people described how they value the relationships they have with their carers and how staff have made a positive difference to them. One young person told the inspector, 'I really love it here, mate. I really love the staff. They want to be here with you.' Another young person said, 'I've told him everything and he really understands.' Young people said that they feel listened to and that they know they matter. Because of this positive relationship, young people quickly form a positive connection with the staff and the home.

Since the last inspection, one young person has left the home and another has moved in. The registered manager met the young person prior to the move and considered the impact that this change would have on all of the young people. Although the dynamics in

the home have changed, staff have been skilful in supporting young people through this transitional period. This has helped to foster a good atmosphere.

Staff recognise the importance of education to young people's confidence and have supported young people to achieve qualifications recently, which will have a positive impact on their future opportunities. However, one young person is only receiving the support of a tutor for a few hours a day. This means that the young person's attainment and progress are limited.

Staff make sure that young people have detailed health plans. Staff make referrals for specialist services, such as child and adolescent mental health services, in discussions with the young people's doctor and social worker. This helps young people to have the help that they need to improve their emotional health.

Staff promote an active lifestyle and support young people to pursue hobbies, such as going to the gym, walking and boxing. This contributes to young people feeling emotionally and physically fit and healthy. Despite encouragement, some young people do not always attend routine medical appointments, which means that health issues may go undetected or unmet. Individual support and incentives are available to support young people to improve their health and hygiene. Health issues, such as weight, smoking and sexual health feature in key working sessions. However, staff do not always have the depth of knowledge or expertise required to support young people to understand the impact of negative lifestyle choices and to change their behaviours for the better. This means that young people do not develop confidence in their own knowledge to make healthy decisions.

Young people enjoy spending time in the home but also have access to a range of activities of their choice, for example trips to the cinema, football, golf, gym and boxing. They also enjoy visits and holidays away from the home. Young people told the inspector, 'We can do what activities we want as long as we do our education.' Access to leisure opportunities helps young people to build their confidence, explore their community and try different experiences.

Young people have individualised placement plans and risk assessments that take account of their assessed needs. As part of the daily routines of the home, young people are encouraged to be independent, and all take part in cooking, washing and cleaning their bedrooms. This helps young people to make good progress towards strengthening self-esteem and developing life skills in preparation for adulthood.

Mealtimes are a communal activity. One young person described meals as 'well nice'. Contact with family and friends is a priority for each young person. One young person told the inspector, 'They sorted out my contact quick time – with my girlfriend and with my mum', The staff have good relationships with parents and one parent told the inspector, 'They keep me informed.' Keeping in touch with significant others helps young people to develop their identities and supports positive emotional health.

Young people live in a comfortable and homely environment, which has recently

benefited from new carpets and re-decoration to the lounge and stairs. Young people's pictures decorate the lounge area. Young people do, on occasion, cause some damage to the home. However, repairs are undertaken quickly and without fuss. Young people's bedrooms are of a good size and they are able to personalise them in keeping with individual tastes and preferences.

Young people's views are sought weekly through a 'young people's chat'. Individual discussion captures young people's views on their care, the running of the home, meal choices and activities. Young people have influenced a variety of things, including the decor of the home, activities, menus and internet access. Young people feel encouraged to attend meetings about their care. Young people said that they know that their views are taken into account in care planning and in decisions that happen in the home.

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

There are positive and supportive relationships between young people and staff, which help young people to feel safe. The young people want to spend time with staff and do not go missing from the home.

Young people's views inform the day-to-day routines in the home and new developments. Young people know that they can request an advocate and are able to identify who to talk to if they have concerns. There are clear systems for making and managing complaints. Consequently, young people know how to make a complaint and the staff support young people to do so.

Individual risk assessments and placement plans reflect the support required to reduce the risk of harm to young people. The registered manager and staff are clear about the support that young people need to keep them safe and discuss changes in handovers and staff meetings. Risk assessments are effective and regularly reviewed. Working with external agencies has helped to reduce risk to young people. For example, work with Aquarius has helped young people to reduce the use of cannabis, helping to keep them safe and healthy.

Staff know the young people well, and boundaries and expectations are clear. Staff role model positive behaviour and are skilful in defusing situations and managing behaviour that challenges. A parent told the inspector, 'They handle him well, know him well. The times they cannot deal with him are rare. They give him support. He is in a nice place.'

Staff rarely use physical intervention to manage behaviour. Instead, staff focus on encouraging socially acceptable behaviour. Rewards and sanctions are used appropriately to encourage positive behaviour and to reinforce expectations regarding behaviour. Staff continually encourage young people to understand the causes of their dissatisfactions and take responsibility for their behaviour. Young people have responded positively to this on occasion, putting situations into context and not allowing themselves to become unduly angry.

Young people understand what bullying is and what they and others need to do if they have a concern about bullying. One young person has made use of the complaints procedure to report two incidents of bullying. Appropriate action followed, including attempted mediation between young people, which helped to ensure that young people are safe and reinforce a zero approach to bullying. The staff are alert and vigilant to the signs and symptoms of bullying, which promotes young people's emotional health, well-being and safety.

Managers and staff work with the local police to promote the safety of young people in the home. Staff are experienced and well trained to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. Staff have received training in physical intervention, de-escalation and safeguarding and have been helped to understand the risks that young people can face from self-harming and child sexual exploitation. This helps to protect young people from the risk of harm and exploitation. Staff feel confident about how to report safeguarding concerns. However, the policy for the protection of children requires development to include arrangements in relation to e-safety and to counter the risks of self-harm and suicide. This shortfall does not have an impact on young people because the staff have good awareness of these risks.

The young people now have access to wi-fi in the home. The home has internet security systems in place that enable young people to be monitored when they use the internet. Staff have general discussions with young people in relation to online safety. However, staff have not received e-safety training to help raise their awareness of online risks to young people's safety.

The registered manager has completed an assessment of the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the children's home, which is now due for review. The manager and staff take the safety and welfare of young people seriously. Good oversight from the registered manager of the health and safety of the building helps to keep staff and young people safe. Regular safety checks are undertaken on gas, electrical and fire safety systems to ensure that they are and remain in good working order.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager has been in post since the home opened in May 2016. He is suitably qualified and experienced for the role. In addition, the home has nine members of staff. Of these, seven hold the level 3 diploma in childcare. Of the remaining two, one member of staff is on maternity leave and the other is due to complete the award by November 2017.

Staff speak highly of the registered manager as do young people. The registered manager and staff strive to ensure that each young person makes progress through individualised care. Aspirations for young people are viable, and the registered manager has a genuine desire for the young people to do the best that they can. He shows good insight into the needs of young people, and one social worker commented, 'The manager seems to have good insight into how early experiences are impacting on

understanding and responses to situations and therefore identify ways to work with him at his pace.'

Relationships are developed and maintained with key professionals, including social workers, educators and a virtual head. The manager challenges others to ensure that young people's care plans are appropriate and that they are progressed. Each young person has individualised plans, overseen by the manager in consultation with the staff team. This means that risks are regularly reviewed and young people's needs are known and they continue to progress from their starting points. Some young people's case records do not hold all of the required statutory documentation. However, this has not had an adverse impact on young people's care because each young person has a clear residential placement plan developed by the manager. This clearly captures young people's progress and achievements.

Young people benefit from a stable and consistent staff team that knows them well. On occasion, staffing levels have not been sufficient to respond to young people's individual needs. This has affected the time staff have available to undertake planned and focused individualised work with young people in relation to their plans. One member of staff described the change in the dynamics of the group and said that it can sometimes be 'tricky' to meet each young person's needs. This was echoed by a social worker who feels that at times safety might be compromised because 'there are often not enough staff to support him and they are always busy.' The responsible individual has sought to provide additional support through taking young people to evening activities. However, this additional support is not entered in the home's rota. This lack of clarity regarding who is working with young people and when could compromise the safety and well-being of young people.

The registered manager understands the importance of staff support and development to ensure that young people are safe and have the help they need to develop in accordance with their plans. Staff have access to regular supervision and an annual appraisal, which includes a development plan. Staff report that the morale of the team is high and they benefit from regular team meetings. As one member of staff told the inspector, 'I have good relationships here and can get things off my chest. That's helpful for me. We always reflect on the way we work with young people.'

All staff complete core training. However, this has not included equality and diversity training or awareness training to help staff to understand the risks to young people of online safety and radicalisation.

Potential employees are subject to an assessment of their suitability to work with young people and confirmed as suitable prior to commencing work with young people. On one occasion, a new member of staff undertook a shift prior to verification of a required reference. This compromised the organisation's recruitment procedures that promote the safety of the young people by preventing unsuitable adults from working with them.

The registered manager has reviewed the statement of purpose. He has completed a six-monthly review of the quality of care and works closely with the monthly

independent visitor. The registered manager finds the visits helpful and acts swiftly to respond to shortfalls and action plans, which improves the quality of care for young people. This is evident through recent improvements to the environment.

The registered manager has met the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection and has an understanding of the strengths of the home and areas for development. There have been improvements in gathering young people's views, and the manager is now developing systems to gather feedback from others to improve the quality of the service for young people.

The manager has sought to maintain good community relations. He knows the neighbours, responds to any concerns raised and regularly uses the local community centre to keep in touch with what is going on in the local area. This ensures the safety of the young people in the community.

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, 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.

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: 1227330

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Positive Outcomes Childcare Limited

Registered provider address: The Lexington, 8 Shoplatch, Shrewsbury, Shropshire
SY1 1HF

Responsible individual: Neil Hedges

Registered manager: Winston Damerum

Inspector

Alison Cooper, social care inspector

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