

1249264

Registered provider: Radical Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a children's home operated by a private company. It is currently registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people. The home cares for young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 9 to 10 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: Not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because

- Staff understand young people's individual needs and vulnerabilities and prioritise these to ensure their safety and well-being. Consequently, young people feel safe and well cared for.
- Young people are supported to maintain contact with those family members who are important to them. The home has been proactive in increasing the amount of contact that young people have with their families, ensuring that significant bonds are maintained.
- Interim management arrangements within the home have proved successful in supporting the needs of both young people and staff. Staff feel confident and well supported as a result.
- Placing authorities are positive about the home's contribution and comment favourably on the progress that young people have made.
- The home is complimented on the good communication that it maintains with professionals, ensuring that all relevant parties are kept well informed.
- Young people very rarely go missing from this home, and do not engage in other activities such as drug or alcohol misuse that would compromise their safety.
- The home promotes praise and recognition of young people's achievements. This has led to a growth in young people's self-esteem and self-worth.
- Young people have good access to advocacy services and feel confident that there is always someone who will listen to them if they feel concerned.
- Young people are attending and positively engaged in education. They are making good progress from their starting points.
- Young people enjoy good health and participate regularly in activities that promote their health and well-being.

The children's home's areas for development

- Shortfalls in case recording were identified. Specifically, routine updating of individual risk assessments after any incident, that a full and comprehensive record is made within 24 hours of any restraint occurring and that all records are clearly signed and dated by the author.
- Opportunities for young people to contribute their collective views about the home and how improvements could be made do not yet exist.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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Not applicable.

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
<p>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must ensure that staff assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. This relates specifically to routinely updating young people's individual risk assessments when incidents occur. (Regulation 12 (2)(a)(i))</p>	30/06/2017
<p>35: Behaviour management policies and records</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made. This relates specifically to ensuring that a comprehensive record exists for each incident. (Regulation 35 (3)(i)–(viii))</p>	30/06/2017
<p>36: Children's case records</p> <p>The registered person must maintain records for each child which are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(c))</p>	30/06/2017

Recommendations

- Seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institution' impression. This refers specifically to the locking of doors to communal areas. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9.)
- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. This relates to providing a regular meeting or arrangement that enables them to provide their collective views. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11.)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home has now been operational for approximately three months following its registration with Ofsted in February 2017. Staff and young people made a planned move to this home from another children's home, operated by the provider. Young people have settled well in this home despite some early incidents that were reported to Ofsted. Additionally, there has been some turnover in staff since their move, including a change in management. This has not had any apparent impact on young people or their progress. Key workers have supported them well to maintain stability and consistency while new staff become familiar with the home and develop their relationships with young people.

This home is situated in a quiet, rural location that offers good access to all local amenities and places of interest. It is decorated and maintained to a high standard, providing a very comfortable and welcoming environment for young people. However, young people expressed some unhappiness that the living room door is being locked at night. The reason for this was unclear and not referenced in any of the home's risk assessments. This practice appears rather institutional and detracts from the otherwise homely feel of the property.

Young people are encouraged with regular praise and small rewards to recognise their daily achievements. This approach is proving successful in nurturing the relationships that they share with staff. Young people say that they 'like' staff and know that there is always someone who they can talk to if they have any concerns. A social worker commented of one young person, 'She is doing really well, she has stabilised. Staff are really supportive of her, she has a particularly good relationship with the manager and her key worker.'

Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of young people's individual needs, guided by highly personalised and detailed care planning. Young people have good opportunities to make their wishes and feelings known through regular discussions with key workers. Individually they are encouraged to make use of advocacy services to support their views and wishes.

Young people are also familiar with the home's complaints process should they wish to raise a concern. One social worker commented, 'Staff went out of their way to ensure [that] her wishes and feelings were heard.' However, despite staff efforts, young people are not engaging in house meetings. This means that currently there is no arrangement to have their collective views heard to influence the smooth running of the home.

Staff have been effective in supporting young people to engage with education. Young people have succeeded in improving their attendance from their original starting points and are making good progress. One social worker remarked, 'She is going to school and when she gets there she's going to lessons and making slow and steady progress. The

liaison between the manager and school has been really positive, with regular monthly meetings. They have a tight plan on this.'

Young people's health needs are well met. They are registered with primary healthcare services in the locality and have good access to additional support services to promote their health and emotional well-being. Staff encourage all young people to eat a healthy diet and engage in activities that provide good fun and exercise. For one young person, activities include regular horse riding, while another young person enjoys bowling and trampolining. Young people participate in planning meals, ensuring that their preferences are taken into consideration. They enjoy a varied and healthy diet that includes a good range of fruit and vegetables.

Staff fully support young people to keep in contact with those family members who are important to them. Young people and their placing authorities recognise and appreciate the efforts that staff make. One young person said that she was really pleased to now have 'unsupervised visits' with her family. Another young person's social worker commented, 'Contact with her family has increased and the home has really been proactive in promoting this. The home has been really good in developing relationships with family members.'

Placing authorities speak highly of their working partnership with this home and the care and support that young people receive. One social worker commented, 'She has made fantastic progress. She can be complex and challenging. The home has been really committed to her. They have supported her behaviour. I feel [that] they really care for her. There's good communication, we must speak about every other day.'

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

Young people say that they feel safe and well cared for by staff. While they do not always like the house rules and boundaries, for example, bedtimes and restrictions on access to mobile phones, they do understand that they exist to promote their safety and well-being.

Staff receive regular training and support to recognise and deal effectively with allegations and other child protection concerns. All safeguarding matters are promptly and appropriately reported to ensure that young people are kept safe from significant harm. Details of such enquiries are well-documented and enable the reader to have a good understanding of the action that has been taken and the outcomes achieved.

Young people's individual vulnerabilities and likely risk-taking behaviours are well understood and documented, ensuring that staff have essential guidance to recognise and minimise the potential for harm. Most young people have considerable histories that include concerns of child sexual exploitation and periods of going missing from home. The home works effectively with the police and other agencies to educate and support young people in keeping themselves safe and protected from others who may do them harm. Young people believe that staff care and would 'feel concerned' about them if they go missing.

During the inspection, shortfalls were identified in the frequency of updating some individual risk assessments. These shortfalls do not represent a failure to recognise risk or compromise any young people's immediate safety. However, they do not support best practice and can appear to make the risk rating disproportionately high.

Young people's involvement in writing their own personal safety plans has provided them with a good opportunity to reflect on some of their challenging behaviours and inform staff how they can best deal with a situation to ensure that it does not escalate. As such, staff are successfully making good use of agreed de-escalation and distraction strategies that are proving effective in reducing confrontational behaviours and damage to property.

Although restraint is rarely used in this home, Ofsted was notified of a misuse of physical intervention on one occasion. Staff reported the matter immediately, confirming the safety and well-being of the young person involved. Appropriate steps were taken by the provider to address this matter swiftly and minimise the likelihood of this ever happening again. Although the incident was fully investigated and well-documented as a child protection concern, a written entry of this intervention was not made in the home's restraint record. Although this omission had no direct impact on young people, it means that the home's record of physical interventions is incomplete.

Young people clearly understand the expectations surrounding their behaviour while living in this home. They are regularly praised and at times given small treats or rewards to recognise and celebrate their positive behaviour. This successfully strengthens their self-esteem and feelings of self-worth. Sanctions are less frequent. However, when they occur, young people are encouraged to contribute their views to ensure that they feel that their consequence is fair and reasonable.

The home promotes safe recruitment and selection practice, ensuring that all staff are qualified, suitably experienced and fully checked and vetted prior to coming to work in the home. Staff ensure that all visitors have a valid reason to be in the home. They routinely check visitors' credentials before allowing them access to the property. These measures are designed to ensure that young people are not exposed to adults who may cause them harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

This is the home's first inspection since its registration in February 2017. The manager originally registered by Ofsted has since resigned her post. The provider acted quickly to establish suitable temporary management arrangements. Short-term arrangements are considered appropriate by Ofsted until the new permanent manager who has been appointed is able to take up post. The staff team is currently led and managed by the home's deputy manager. Additional support and experience is being provided by registered managers from other homes within the locality, operated by the provider.

The deputy manager is currently working towards his level 5 qualification in leadership

and management in children's residential care. He has proven to be a positive influence, raising staff morale and acting as a positive role model for new staff. Although there has been some turnover in staffing since the home's registration, the provider has taken appropriate steps to strengthen the staff team. Qualified staff from sister homes have transferred to ensure that there is sufficient experience within the team to provide good support and maintain good practice. Staff display confidence in their roles and say that they 'feel empowered' and 'enjoy coming to work'.

The interim manager's approach is to work inclusively with his staff team, enabling them to act with appropriate autonomy and confidence. He provides regular supervision and consultation, promoting a reflective practice approach. This enables staff to develop a thorough understanding of young people's needs and how they can be best supported. Staff meet regularly and use this time effectively to discuss the progress of young people, their challenges and the agreed strategies to help them move forward.

Staff access a range of appropriate training from the provider's training and development programme to support them in their role. New staff complete a comprehensive induction programme to ensure that they are familiar with the young people and the home's policies, procedures and practices. This supports their confidence and knowledge in working with young people.

Suitable plans were created and followed to help young people move and adjust to their new home. This included visiting the property prior to its registration to choose bedrooms and plan decoration and soft furnishings. Young people say that they found this helpful so that they could make it feel more like home.

Staff appropriately reported a number of incidents to Ofsted in a short space of time following the move to this home. This included some minor damage to the property and some challenging behaviour from young people. All incidents were well reported and appropriately managed to ensure that all relevant parties were kept informed and understood how matters had been resolved. Young people said during this inspection that they were 'just having a laugh'. There have not been any further recent incidents.

Good internal and external monitoring arrangements are established, ensuring that there is good oversight of the day-to-day operation of the home and how it is performing to promote young people's safety and well-being.

Young people's records are mostly well maintained and kept regularly updated. However, some records reviewed during this inspection were without a signature or date. This has the impact of the reader not always being certain about who has authored the document or when it was completed. This falls short in meeting good recording practice.

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: 1249264

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Radical Services Limited

Registered provider address: Rouse House, 2 Wyther Lane, Leeds LS5 3BT

Responsible individual: Sonia Bennett

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector(s)

Gillian Walters: social care inspector

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