

SC065684

Registered provider: J & R Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately run and provides care and accommodation for no more than six young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. Education is provided in an adjacent building.

Inspection dates: 21 to 22 June 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: 23 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people make good progress while living in the home. Staff's high expectations, along with the positive relationships and approaches deployed, ensure that young people are able to develop emotionally and personally.
- Young people have excellent educational attendance and engagement. Young people who have had significant periods out of education now attend full time. Those approaching the end of Year 11 have secured college placements for the upcoming academic year.
- Staff work effectively as a team to ensure that young people know what the rules and boundaries are, and what is expected of them. There has been a significant reduction in the use of physical interventions over the last six months.
- Young people attend daily meetings where they are able to air their views, ideas or grievances. Any specific concerns in relationships are managed through restorative meetings with all involved in the incident. This has produced positive results.
- Social workers comment favourably about the home and staff and their impact on the progress of young people. A parent also reported on how positive their relationship is with staff and how much they have helped their son.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The manager needs to produce detailed evaluation of the reasons why restraints have reduced so significantly, mainly to identify that practice and positive relationships are the cause, as is assumed currently.
- The home is currently being redecorated and renovated in parts. However, there remain many small issues in the home which detract from its homeliness, such as a burnt light pull and numbers on the bedroom doors. The management team needs to systematically identify what issues can be rectified and then improve the homeliness of the environment.
- Young people's care plans are comprehensive and link with other documents, such as risk assessments. However, young people's culture and identity is not explored beyond their religion or ethnicity.
- Some language used in the home and records is not current, and can be deemed stigmatising, such as 'delinquent behaviour'. This is not reflective of the positive care observed during the inspection.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/02/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
02/08/2016	Full	Good
21/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
08/07/2015	Full	Requires improvement

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>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1) and (2)(h))</p> <p>In particular, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of physical interventions more frequently, including trends and patterns; and regularly inspect the quality of the building and décor, and remedy any issues swiftly to ensure that it remains homely.</p>	11/08/2017
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety. The requirements are that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.</p> <p>This especially relates to gaining a full employment history with a satisfactory explanation of any gaps in employment, in writing. (Regulation 32(3)(d))</p>	11/08/2017

Recommendations

- Ensure that young people’s in-house care plans demonstrate the young people’s individual culture and identity beyond their religion and cultural identity. (‘Guide to children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 17, paragraph 3.21)
- Ensure that staff use current and non-stigmatising language in the home and its records. (‘Guide to children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.3)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people make good progress while living in the home through the strong and positive relationships formed with staff. Interactions are positive and allow young people the time to express themselves, while staff are encouraging of young people's skills, hobbies and interests. Young people recognise that staff want what is best for them.

Young people feel listened to, in particular during daily group meetings. They also have the opportunity to spend time alone with staff, to share their thoughts and feelings. During the inspection, young people were confident in expressing their views to both education and social care inspectors. Young people's views are sought on all aspects of their care, and they are integral to their statutory reviews. Staff make it clear when a young person's views cannot be acted on and explain why this is the case. Most young people see the residence as their home and are able to personalise their bedrooms, and have input in the styling and décor of communal spaces. When appropriate, young people have access to independent visitors or advocates, although there has been some difficulty in sourcing these.

Young people know how to complain and who to complain to. Records are clear and show that the young person has been listened to and that issues have been resolved to the young person's satisfaction whenever possible. A full explanation is provided to the individual when the action they have requested cannot be taken. Many issues in the group are resolved without the need for formal complaints, through joint discussion with the young people involved, and sharing how each is feeling, while seeking a positive resolution.

All young people have excellent attendance at either the on-site school or their placements in the community. This is a particular area of strength for the home, given that many young people had been out of education for significant periods prior to placement. The close working between school and home staff, including staff supporting young people in the classroom, ensures consistency and continuity of care for young people. Handovers, with young people's input, allow for issues to be resolved swiftly and also for positive observations to be shared between teams. For those educated off-site, staff liaise effectively with teachers to ensure that key information is shared and the placement remains successful. Those who are reaching the end of Year 11 are completing their GCSE exams and have successfully secured college placements for the following academic year.

Young people enjoy a wide range of socially and emotionally stimulating activities, both in the community and in the home. During the inspection, a young person built a pond with a fountain and planted flowers to complete the project. Other activities included swimming, playing basketball, shopping and trampolining. Young people's interests are actively promoted, including seeking a modelling career for one young person, while ensuring he is safe from exploitation in the process of sourcing a contract.

Young people are welcomed to the home and transitions are at the pace the individual is comfortable with. The newest resident has found his place in the group and the others have accepted him well. Young people are prepared for adulthood through learning independence skills at school and in the home. They are supported to learn skills such as

cooking, cleaning and self-care. The main skill for adulthood is young people being able to communicate effectively with others and respecting others' differences.

Young people are treated with dignity and respect. This notion is promoted throughout all aspects of the young people's lives, including challenging bullying behaviours as a group. Any issues in the group are managed swiftly, and those involved are supported to understand their role in the situation and the impact on each other. This is developing to the point where young people are able to manage conflicts independently or with minimal staff support. Young people are aware of the rules and boundaries, and consistency ensures that all young people know what is acceptable. The in-house reward scheme is understood by all young people and has been a key tool in promoting positive behaviour.

Young people are supported to understand healthy lifestyles and what this means for them. They are encouraged to eat a balanced diet with plenty of fresh produce and to engage in physical activities. Young people are also supported to reflect on and improve their emotional well-being, and they have access to a therapist who visits the home weekly for individual sessions. Medication is stored appropriately and there is an effective system in place for its administration. Young people may be given the opportunity to self-administer medication, when appropriate, although none are currently doing this. Young people have access to medical professionals for routine checks and appointments, in addition to emergency or specific need. Those who struggle to attend are encouraged by staff, and fresh appointments made if they decline to attend.

There have been delays in accessing specialist help, such as child and adolescent mental health services for some young people, including those who are placed away from their home authority. The managers in the home advocate effectively for young people in this instance and have challenged services who are not providing an appropriate package for young people. Social workers consistently comment that staff in the home are very flexible and facilitate any appointments, meetings or contact, often travelling long distances to do so.

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

Young people's actions and demeanours show that they feel safe in the home. All were observed to approach staff when they were worried or upset, and generally accepted the help and guidance offered during challenging situations.

Staff have a strong awareness of each young person's vulnerabilities and understand their role in protecting them. Any concerns of abuse or harm are reported swiftly to relevant partner agencies, and staff ensure that procedures in the home protect young people. The designated officer for safeguarding in the local authority raised no concerns over practice since the last inspection, and confirmed that the home reports concerns as required. The responsible individual attends regular multi-disciplinary meetings with the local authority and partner agencies to consider young people who are at risk from all forms of exploitation and how to protect them effectively. Staff have a good understanding of the risks posed by the internet and support young people in keeping safe on-line and while using mobile devices. There are currently no young people

deemed at risk of sexual exploitation, gang-related activity or radicalisation. However, staff have a good understanding of the indicators in each area.

Young people who are missing from care benefit from a co-ordinated response when they are away without permission. Each young person has an agreed protocol for staff to follow. Staff will look for young people in known locations, including calling at friends' and relatives' houses, and contacting them and those known to them by phone. The police are contacted in line with individual written protocols, which are based on the young person's age and vulnerability. Return interviews have been sporadic for some young people, and the registered manager has challenged placing authorities about this.

The main area of concern currently impacting young people in the home is bullying. The team is proactive in disrupting bullying behaviour and addressing this with all involved. Meetings between those perceived as bullies and victims are an effective means for exploring the issues. One meeting observed demonstrated that staff explore the reason for the bullying behaviour, including the actions of all young people involved, the impact to all, and how to reduce incidents in the future. A young person has been supported in contacting the police when they were hit by another young person, resulting in the youth offending team providing a service for a young person.

Positive behaviour is actively promoted in the home. Restorative approaches are increasingly used and young people are responding well to these. The volume of restraints has almost halved since the last inspection, although there is little evaluation of how this has come about other than the hard data. The registered manager recognises that further analysis is required to determine why there is a reduction. Staff are challenged when it is felt that interventions have not been appropriate, or when they have not been implemented and have placed the young person or others at risk. Staff are confident in their responsibility to de-escalate behaviour and recognise restraint as the last option.

Staff recruitment practice is thorough and a range of pre-employment checks are undertaken, including thorough risk assessment of information provided on disclosure and barring service (DBS) reports. Some gaps were noted in applicants' employment histories; the inspector was assured that these had been explored verbally, but no record of this was retained on staff's files.

Young people are protected from avoidable risk through regular checks and monitoring of firefighting equipment and the safety of the building. A self-locking external door failed during the inspection and was fixed by the following day. The general condition of the building is sound, although a room-by-room review has not been completed to ensure that the environment remains well maintained and decorated.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is effectively run by the manager, who was registered in May 2017. He has many years' experience of working in children's care settings and holds suitable qualifications for the role. There has been a significant change in the staff team since the previous inspection, with many new members of staff joining. This has had a positive impact on the home, because most staff have had extensive experience in other children's care environments. The new staff are able to bring transferable skills and

approaches to the home, and are keen to try new ways of working. This is reflected in a number of ways, such as in the reduction in restraints, and increased use of restorative approaches to behaviour management.

Staff say that they are happy in their roles and feel well supported by the management and senior teams. They say managers are approachable and open to ideas and suggestions. Staff are familiar with the aims and ethos of the service as set out in the statement of purpose, and their work reflects this. They benefit from regular, constructive supervisions. Monthly meetings away from the home with the home's therapist allow staff to reflect on their practice and the needs of young people. Training is up to date and offers a range of courses which go beyond mandatory skills.

The quality of care is regularly monitored through scrutiny of reports compiled as a result of visits in line with regulation 44, with prompt responses to any shortfalls identified. Good-quality manager's reports, in line with regulation 45, show a sound level of evaluation and analysis of trends and patterns. However, there is no in-depth scrutiny of how the trends and patterns have come about, particularly regarding the significant reduction in the use of restraint. The home's development plan forms part of the regulations 45 monitoring, demonstrating the role of the monitoring in driving improvement.

Young people's plans are clear and effective, and link with risk assessments and behavioural strategies. The plans demonstrate the progress young people have made since they have moved into the home and what their next goals are. The plans indicate any religious observance or cultural identity and needs, but do not do so in a nuanced way. For example, the plans do not explore culture and identity beyond religion or ethnic origin. Staff work closely with placing authorities to ensure that plans are relevant and up to date, but also to inform of any significant changes, positive or negative, for the young person.

Young people's records are up to date and maintained to a good standard. They provide a clear reflection of the young person's presentation for any particular day. Some language used is not current and can be considered as stigmatising, such as 'delinquent behaviour'. This is at odds with the staff's positive approach to care and the inclusive atmosphere generated in the home.

Managers seek to gain feedback from young people and interested parties, such as parents and partner agencies. One parent was particularly positive about the home, and said that he was kept well informed and that his views were always listened to. Social workers echoed this sentiment. The management team is keen to further improve the service provided. The team values the input of Ofsted inspectors and has worked to meet the requirements and recommendations set at the last inspection. The responsible individual is fully aware of the grade profile for the home and is keen to ensure that it remains consistently good rather than dipping, as has been the pattern. The culture in the home is of high expectations and aspirations for all young people, and this is evident when observing interactions.

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: SC065684

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: J & R Care Limited

Registered provider address: J & R Care, Ash House South, Ash Road, New Ash Green, LONGFIELD, Kent DA3 8JF

Responsible individual: Jane Parish

Registered manager: Eric De Mel

Inspector

Jennie Christopher, social care inspector

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