

SC010090

Registered provider: Partners in Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned home which provides care and accommodation for up to four children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 22 to 23 August 2017

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

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

Date of last inspection: 8 March 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

- Young people make good progress from their starting points. Young people are engaged in education that is tailored to meet their individual needs. Staff support young people to achieve their potential.
- Young people are supported to form positive and trusting relationships with staff. These relationships underpin effective behaviour management and significantly contribute to keeping young people safe.
- Staff support young people to have positive contact with their families, where appropriate. Staff work in partnership with young people's families.
- Staff support young people to develop the skills and confidence to manage their lives as adults. Preparation for independence is planned effectively, with young people being encouraged to take small steps towards acquiring new skills.
- Staff safeguard young people extremely well, and respond effectively when incidents occur. In all cases, risk to young people is reduced.
- Staff manage behaviour skilfully and support young people to develop strategies to regulate their own behaviour.
- The manager provides good leadership in the home. She has developed a positive and confident staff team.
- Staff work in partnership with professionals to achieve the best outcomes for young people. Staff advocate on behalf of young people when necessary.
- The home provides a safe and welcoming environment.

The children's home's areas for development

- A requirement has been made about the independence of the newly appointed independent person.
- A recommendation has been made for the registered person to consider why there is a rapid turnover of staff.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
11/07/2016	Full	Good
02/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12/01/2016	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
<p>43: Appointment of independent person</p> <p>The registered provider may not appoint the following as an independent person; a person who has, or has had, a connection with the registered person; a person working at the home; or a child, which the registered provider considers to give rise to doubts about that person's impartiality (Regulation 43 (3)(g)(i)(ii)(iii))</p>	08/09/2017

Recommendations

- The use of agency or bank staff should be carefully monitored and reviewed. Rapid turnover of staff, whether agency or directly employed, is likely to indicate underlying problems and should be monitored and addressed by the registered person. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 10.12)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home has experienced a period of stability since the last inspection. Young people receive good quality, individualised care that is responsive to their needs. Staff who are, in the majority, appropriately skilled and experienced, provide care to the young people. While consistency within the staff team has been an issue in the home, the senior leadership team have remained consistent. Overall, young people are making good progress from their starting points.

Young people who have lived at the home a while are engaged in education or training. This is tailored to meet their individual needs. For other young people who are new to the home, staff are looking at appropriate educational placements. This will ensure that young people can return to an education setting in September. Staff are ambitious for young people and support their educational progress and attainment. A strength of the home is how staff support young people to remain central to their own plans. Staff support young people to be aspirational and take steps to achieve their own goals.

Staff members commented that they always build on the relationships between young people and their parents, where appropriate. One staff member commented that a parent had said they were pleased with the progress her son is making after a number of previous placement moves. He added, 'We communicate well with mum. I tell her about her son's progress, not just the problems.'

Staff use incentives to support young people to develop skills across a number of areas such as keeping their bedrooms tidy, maintaining school attendance and getting involved in tasks in the home. This helps to promote young people's independent living skills. Staff also keep young people safe and help them to make safer choices. Incentive planning is completely individualised and provides a mechanism for staff and young people to agree goals and areas to work on.

The home has a well-established preparation for independence pathway. This helps young people to achieve greater independence and enables them to learn the basic skills ready to leave care. Young people's emotional readiness and realistic awareness of the skills needed is harder to work with. The managers expressed concern to the social worker that one young person was not emotionally prepared for leaving care and therefore she might struggle to live independently. The placing authority accepted this and a new plan was put into place. Staff work with young people at their own pace, but recognise when a more proactive approach is needed.

A very positive aspect of the care provided is the increase in young people's self-esteem and confidence, and the capacity of young people to regulate their emotions. This

increased confidence has supported young people in applying for part-time work, and being able to maintain positive relationships. A professional commented upon her young person having made good progress in the home and said, 'She has matured an awful lot and I can really see this lately. She has a very good rapport with staff.'

Parents and placing authorities speak very positively about staff working in partnership with parents and supporting contact arrangements when appropriate. Staff send parents and social workers weekly updates, sharing achievements as well as any issues for the young person.

Staff respect and value family relationships for young people. They understand the significance of these relationships for young people. Staff work with young people and families to support positive contact and to improve difficult relationships. Staff speak warmly and positively about young people and demonstrate skill and experience in meeting their individual needs.

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

Young people invariably come to the home deemed to be at high risk of harm or have suffered significant harm. For all of the young people, within a short period of time the risk posed to them is significantly reduced. The home provides a physically and emotionally safe environment for young people.

The home has a location risk assessment. This assessment identifies details of all risks specific to the home's location. It also contains information about the physical environment, access to transport links and any known risks in the community.

A core feature of the service is the outstanding ability of staff to use clear boundaries to keep young people safe. Staff help and protect young people through the implementation of the risk and behaviour management plan. Staff work tirelessly to try to gather as much information as possible about potential risk and vulnerabilities, prior to a young person's admission. Staff continue to work with the placing authorities to review and amend risk assessments on a regular basis. Young people's files are well maintained, with staff taking steps to ensure that all necessary information is present. Having full and detailed information facilitates a better understanding of the young person's risks, vulnerabilities and strengths.

Young people feel safe in the home. Regular consultation with young people, parents and professionals provides the opportunity for senior staff to review progress. Young people meet on a weekly basis to talk about the home and any issues they may have. Bullying is not an issue in the home. Matching has been problematic in the past, but staff

have worked effectively with young people to help them manage their own behaviour. Staff have access to clinical support through consultation with an in-house clinician. This enables staff to improve their understanding of the emotions expressed through behaviour and employ different strategies to support young people.

The home employs a positive behaviour management strategy, using incentives to reward positive behaviour. Staff have not used physical intervention to manage behaviour for several months. They are skilled in using a range of de-escalation techniques to manage challenging behaviour and this is working well. Staff are usually able to recognise triggers for challenging behaviour. The incentive system is used to work with young people and agree strategies to keep them safe. A real strength of the home is acknowledging that young people will sometimes make unsafe decisions, but this is a point of learning for young people and staff and this does not need to escalate into a cycle of negative behaviour.

Staff understand the risks to young people. Young people have free time and access to the internet, but these activities are risk assessed and managed accordingly. Staff are realistic about young people becoming increasingly independent. Staff keep a clear log of all safeguarding concerns, accidents and incidents.

Visiting professionals acknowledge that staff work hard to reduce the number of negative incidents, for example by subtly de-escalating incidents and diverting the attention of the young people. Because of these efforts, young people hardly ever go missing from the home, and the risks from child sexual exploitation and self-harm are low. Staff rarely call the police to the home. Young people engage in positive behaviour, partly because of the incentives on offer. When incidents of missing from care, have occurred they are managed well, with staff following multi-agency guidance to support the young person's safe return. Staff understand the importance of young people having the opportunity to speak to someone independent of the home upon their return. Independent return interviews are generally well documented, although young people often decline the opportunity.

Staff have access to a broad range of training opportunities, some delivered on-line and others delivered via more traditional group events. Informal opportunities for staff development also take place during team meetings. This enables managers to identify areas for development and training which might sit outside prescribed mandatory training and refresher courses. There is good evidence of staff appraisal and training. Managers are confident that staff have appropriate awareness of safeguarding procedures.

Investigations into allegations of harm are managed appropriately, involving the

appropriate agencies.

Agency staff are sometimes used to cover staff absence or leave. A robust procedure is in place to ensure that unsuitable adults do not work with young people. Recruitment processes are robust, with all pre-employment checks being completed in full before staff commence their work in the home. Staff supervision takes place regularly and is well documented.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is appropriately skilled and experienced. She has the requisite management qualifications. There have been staffing issues within the home as nine staff members have left the home since the last inspection. This constant change in staff does not allow young people to develop trusting relationships with care staff. The senior leadership team including the deputy and manager have provided stability and dependable care.

Staff receive regular, good quality supervision. This is recorded well and provides the opportunity for reflective and task orientated discussion. Appraisal processes are effective, with staff receiving appropriate support and challenge.

The registered manager has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the home. She shows a great deal of understanding regarding the skills within the staff team and the ethos she is trying to create. Young people are at the centre of the work and staff value and respect young people as individuals. The registered manager utilises a range of processes to monitor the quality of care provided. This includes responding constructively to any recommendations made through external monitoring of the home, as well as having robust internal monitoring systems.

The manager and the independent visitor monitor the service well. The independent visitor has introduced a variety of ways of gaining the views of young people and other people about the service. From next month, a new independent visitor has been appointed. She was a registered manager with a sister home within the company. She was previously the line manager of the deputy manager of the home and knows the staff and young people well. This does not meet the requirement of the regulation that requires the independent person to not have or have had a connection to the registered person, a person working at the home or a child.

Consultation takes place regularly and concerns all stakeholders, including staff. The registered manager is beginning to evaluate this information so that it can shape how the home develops. The staff have a very clear view that positive progress comes from

young people being able to visualise what they want and 'buying in' to their plans. Case records and plans reflect this to a degree.

Staff work effectively with placing authorities and other professionals. On occasion, the registered manager has challenged other professionals, for example in care planning decisions, or when the required documentation has not been forwarded to the home. The registered manager and team also welcome, and are open to professional challenge in order to review the care they provide.

The home is in a good state of repair and presents as a welcoming, child centred home. There are no obvious signs of wear and tear, and the ground floor in particular looks well presented. Young people have good-sized bedrooms, which they decorate to their taste, reflecting their individual style.

The statement of purpose clearly sets out the ethos and objectives of the home, and provides an accurate description of the service provided.

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: SC010090

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Partners in Care Limited

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

Responsible individual: Sonia Bennett

Registered manager: Susan Harrington

Inspector

Elaine Clare, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

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