

# 1255139

Registered provider: Homes2inspire Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This children's home is privately owned and is registered to care for up to six young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

**Inspection dates:** 10 to 11 October 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:** not applicable

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- A stable staff team provides a settled home environment. Young people, who have complex needs, are building positive relationships with staff and peers.
- Young people are responding to nurturing care. They are provided with consistent boundaries and routines. As a result, they are making progress.
- Staff work well with partner agencies to keep young people safe. Concerning

behaviours are reduced as a result of robust assessment and management of risks.

- Young people, some having a history of poor attendance, are engaging in education. Staff are aspirational for them and support them to achieve.
- Managers are developing good practice. Managers respond to recommendations from quality assurance reports and consultation.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Information shared by an agency about a young person's behaviour in another setting raised concerns about potential risks to peers. This information had not been added to risk assessments. A recommendation is made to improve practice relating to risk assessments.
- Recording of incidents of going missing from the home and unauthorised absences needs to be clearer and more consistent so that staff can accurately evaluate the information. A recommendation is made to improve practice.

## **Recent inspection history**

This is the home's first inspection.

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

### Recommendations

- Records must be kept detailing all individual incidents when children go missing from the home (regulation 36 schedule 3(14)). Evaluation of missing incidents should be undertaken to identify any gaps in training, skills, knowledge of staff or to record and retain evidence of what worked well. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.31)
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

### Inspection judgements

#### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This home is situated in a busy city centre and has all male residents. Young people referred to the home have a range of complex needs and behaviours. Staff are skilled and experienced in engaging young people, and they provide nurturing care. As a result, the home is stable and young people are making good, and in some cases exceptional, progress.

It is a comfortable, well-decorated home environment. Young people's rooms are personalised. There is very little evidence of damage. The small garden area has a raised bed for vegetables and some of the young people get involved in tending this.

A strength of the care provided is the clear expectation from the start about attending education, alongside good routines and clear boundaries. This has been effective in supporting young people to develop positive behaviours. Some young people have improved their diet and their sleep patterns as a result of good routines.

Young people benefit from carefully planned admission to the home. The manager ensures that relevant information is shared between involved professionals. When considering admissions, consideration is given to the needs of the current residents, and the impact of the combination of known behaviours and risks. A small number of unplanned admissions and planned short-term admissions have been made in the past. The manager reported that as a team they have reflected on the impact of this and have strengthened their pre-admission processes to enhance decision-making and minimise disruption to the group.

On admission, there is a newly developed care plan that agrees the aims for the placement. The plan includes the use of a number of child-friendly tools to measure progress from starting points, incorporating the views of the home, the young person and the responsible social worker. Plans evidence young people's contribution and their

views and wishes. They are reviewed as part of the young person's care planning. This supports managers and young people to measure progress and identify any barriers to progress.

Staff prioritise building relationships and engaging young people in their care planning. Weekly planners provide structure. Expectations about engaging in education and training, taking responsibility for their room and developing independence skills are clear from the start. Daily engagement records are clear about incentives and consequences. Social workers and care staff report that young people respond well to the consistency of care.

Staff know young people's individual needs well. The inspector observed that young people have developed positive relationships with carers and peers. When young people returned to the home from education they chatted with staff about their day, plans for the evening and some helped prepare a meal together.

Young people benefit from participating in a range of activities, and the whole group recently went on holiday together. Young people reported that they enjoyed the holiday and the chance to participate in activities such as swimming and ice-skating. This helps young people to build positive peer relationships, as well as build confidence and social skills.

All of the young people are receiving education. Most are in full-time education. For some, regular attendance and engagement in education represent exceptional progress. Two young people have started college this term. They have been successful in securing places on vocational courses in fields that they want to secure employment in. One young person moved into the home at a difficult time in the academic year. Staff supported him to travel some distance to complete his exams. The education coordinator for the provider ensured that he was able to continue his revision. As a result, disruption and impact to his timetable were limited.

There is a concern about one young person's engagement in education. It is recognised that due to this young person's history and individual needs, there have been significant barriers to educational progress. Staff are working with a home tutor to re-engage this young person again.

Staff ensure that they are aware of and promote young people's individual identity and cultural needs. Young people are supported to practise their religious beliefs.

Staff work closely with social workers and family members to promote contact for young people with family and significant people, particularly siblings and friends. They recognise the importance of young people maintaining and repairing relationships so that they can experience positive relationships in the future.

There is no evidence, or reports of, bullying behaviour. Individual work with young people addresses healthy relationships, including peer relationships. There has been one mediation session between three young people following concerns about conflict, which

is now resolved.

There are a range of opportunities for young people to raise concerns about their care, relationships or anything they want to. There are weekly residents' meetings and most young people attend regularly. The records evidence that they share views and make requests that are listened to. The manager has introduced 'you said, we did' feedback to demonstrate that requests have been actioned or explanations given where a request is not agreed. There is a suggestions and complaints box, a young people's noticeboard with contact numbers for making complaints, and they are provided with advice and contact details in their admissions pack and young people's guide. An advocacy service is provided, which is particularly important for some of the young people who are placed a long way from their home community.

Young people report that they have good relationships with staff; some referred to getting on well with their key workers and with managers. All say that they know how to report concerns and whom they would speak to if they needed to. Staff are aware of the young people who struggle with showing their feelings and respond sensitively to this, encouraging a range of ways of sharing information. The inspector observed an open, friendly atmosphere and it is evident that managers are available, and know all of the young people well.

Young people have detailed health plans that include key information regarding historical and current health needs. Staff are tenacious in ensuring that young people keep health appointments. Young people benefit from regular key-work sessions. These are individual meetings with a trusted, familiar member of staff. Topics include, for example, sharing information about healthy relationships, healthy lifestyles, and identifying and addressing barriers to progress.

Staff are proactive in requesting referrals to specialist services to assess and meet young people's needs. There was clear evidence of staff understanding and responding sensitively to young people's emotional needs and the impact of previous life experiences on behaviour. Staff keep detailed records to inform continuous assessment. Social workers report that valuable information is shared that informs care planning discussions and decisions.

When young people are not making progress, managers request a professionals' meeting. In the case of one young person, it has been agreed that a more specialist placement is required. Managers and staff have provided information to support the local authority in reaching this decision and in identifying a more appropriate placement. The manager is confident that staff will prepare and support the young person to move in a positive, planned way.

Young people in this home benefit from an established skills programme that is accredited and will support them to learn and evidence a range of useful life and independence skills.

Their weekly planners encourage the development of independence skills, using

incentives to support this. Young people are encouraged to establish links in the community which will help them to gain work experience. During this inspection, one young person was very excited about securing a part-time job. This will be valuable work experience for him while he is at college. All of the young people and staff celebrated this achievement with him.

The provider has also developed a 'staying close' offer to provide ongoing support for young people, as assessed and agreed as part of care planning. For some young people, this offer is being discussed with social workers.

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

Staff are aware of, and demonstrate, an understanding of young people's individual vulnerabilities and safeguarding needs.

Young people have behaviour and risk management plans. These detail the risk and behaviour, measure the level of concern and provide advice to staff about possible triggers and helpful responses. These plans are discussed and agreed with social workers and young people. They are reviewed and updated regularly, so remain relevant.

Staff understand the risks associated with young people who go missing. They follow safeguarding procedures and the joint protocol between the police and social care. The police report that staff are proactive in searching for young people and make contact if young people are absent without agreement from the home. Some of the young people have a history of going missing or being absent without agreement. For most of the young people, incidents of going missing have significantly reduced as a result of the clear expectations from the start, and building nurturing and trusted relationships with staff.

One vulnerable young person has been absent without agreement on a number of occasions. Staff are able to keep in contact with this young person most of the time and have located him on a number of occasions. He always returns to the home. It is a concern that this behaviour has not ceased, although currently the incidents appear to be reducing. The manager has requested strategy meetings in response to this. These meetings are convened to share information and agree a way forward to prevent risks to this young person. There has been one occasion when criminal behaviour has been suspected, but there is currently no evidence of exploitation.

Missing and unauthorised absence records are always completed. The records are generally good. However, there are a small number of examples of poor records regarding the decision about the status of the missing incident with the police and the quality of internal and external return interviews with the young person. This can prevent effective evaluation of the risks to the young person and of staff practice. A recommendation is made to strengthen recording, particularly the recording of the decision with the police regarding the status of the incident.

A number of the young people did have a history of substance misuse, to varying degrees. They have been referred to a voluntary organisation, which works with young people to raise awareness and prevent substance misuse. There has been limited evidence of the impact of substance misuse. Staff continue to reinforce messages about the harm and risks associated with substance misuse in individual work. There has been an overall reduction in young people's substance misuse.

One young person has a history of violent and aggressive behaviour. The home has worked very closely with the placing local authority, the youth offending service locally and with a youth training centre. This has provided continuity of care for this young person. The social worker reported that this had been the young person's most stable placement. Early in the placement, there had been one incident involving violence but this has not happened again. A deficit in the risk assessment was identified relating to potential violence towards peers. This followed information shared by another placement. A recommendation is made to strengthen risk assessments and alert staff to the need to monitor any emerging concerns. At the time of the inspection, however, the work with this young person was an excellent example of agencies working together to reduce and manage concerning behaviours, provide consistent care and enhance positive relationships.

As a result of positive relationships and effective multi-agency working, safeguarding concerns have been minimal. Additionally, there have been no allegations of harm and no complaints about bullying.

Young people are building resilience and developing confidence and self-esteem. Consequently, there are reduced incidents of young people negatively influencing each other in the home or responding to negative influences in the community.

One incident of physical intervention has taken place. This was used as a last resort to prevent harm to staff. The manager reviewed records. Staff are trained to use de-escalation strategies and are trained in the use of physical intervention and restraint.

Managers and staff have received training in dealing with allegations of harm against adults who work with children. Managers have received training in safe recruitment and safe care. Staff report that there is an open and transparent culture and they would report any concerns to managers.

One social worker reported that a young person she is responsible for struggles to engage, and he has had some difficult experiences to deal with in his life. He does engage with staff. He has received counselling as a result of staff identifying this need. The social worker believes that staff understand and meet his needs. She went on to say that she has frequently visited the home. She has observed staff managing some challenging behaviours consistently and effectively.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The manager is experienced and suitably qualified. She has been the home manager, working alongside the deputy manager, for 18 months. They have grown in confidence. They have established a stable staff team and are embedding good practice.

The manager reported that young people refer to previous chaotic lifestyles and lots of change and she wants them to experience settled, predictable care. She believes that all of the staff are aspirational for the young people. They champion young people's needs so that they can reach their potential, and they celebrate their achievements.

One member of staff said: 'The home is stable and the young people are as settled as they have ever been.' The staff team consists of experienced and qualified staff, staff working towards qualification, and a small number of recently appointed staff. There is a diverse staff team. There are no vacancies and staff sickness is not problematic.

The rotas and daily records evidence that there is sufficient staff capacity to meet young people's individual needs and respond to any incidents such as unauthorised absences. Managers ensure that there is a balance on shifts of gender and experience. Staff adhere to individual risk and behaviour management plans.

The management team, following consultation, has changed the responsibilities of recently appointed staff. Previously, they may have been given key-work responsibility and would have completed weekly summaries for social workers. Now, only experienced staff and seniors have this responsibility. As a result, new staff can focus on building relationships with young people.

There are occasions when the home does not receive the records of meetings in a timely way from placing local authorities. The home has developed a detailed template to ensure that staff attending meetings capture essential information and can action relevant recommendations without delay. The inspector saw evidence that this is working effectively. The manager continues to request the formal records.

The manager and the education coordinator have been tenacious in requesting meetings for personal education plans and education and healthcare assessments and plans. This is to ensure that there is up-to-date information and targets incorporated in young people's care plans.

Staff have a protected induction, which includes mandatory safeguarding training. New staff shadow shifts and complete an assessed probationary period. All staff have regular supervision. Records demonstrate a supervision agreement in line with the home's policy, an agreed agenda, and time is provided for reflective practice. Young people's needs and progress are discussed in supervision and in team meetings. Staff report that managers and seniors are supportive, accessible, and provide opportunities to reflect on practice and provide good advice.

Staff have training and development opportunities, supplemented by online training,



peer mentoring, and learning circles delivered by peers, who have attended training and/or have specialist knowledge and skills.

Staff are able to articulate young people's needs and understand policies and procedures that support meeting their needs.

Managers reflect on incidents with a 'lessons learned' exercise. This includes the views of partner agencies.

Professionals report that there is good partnership working. Staff share weekly summaries regarding individual young people with social workers. Managers and staff attend and contribute to strategy and planning meetings. Managers make referrals to the police and to social care appropriately.

A social worker reported: 'Partnership working with the home is good, and care is good because staff use consistent strategies and consequences.'

The management team has a good overview of young people's progress and staff practice. They use a range of quality assurance mechanisms, including file audits, monthly evaluation and reporting of key indicators, and quality assurance visits by management peers and senior managers. The manager responds to recommendations from the independent visitor reports.

The manager has a good understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development. Quality assurance information and consultation with staff and young people inform the home's development plan and the workforce development plan. The manager said that her aim is: 'Continuous improvement of practice that drives better outcomes for young people.'

## **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 differences 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 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:** 1255139

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Homes2inspire Limited

**Registered provider address:** Prospects House, 19 Elmfield Road, Bromley BR1 1LT

**Responsible individual:** Joanne Collins

**Registered manager:** Rachel Rodriguez Rosario

## Inspector

Cathey Moriarty, social care inspector

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