

SC381531

Registered provider: Young Alliance Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home offering care and accommodation for five young people who may have learning disabilities.

Inspection dates: 25 to 26 October 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 22 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None.

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- The home continues to make an outstanding difference to the lives of young people. The experience of living at the home considerably enhances the lives of young people.
- Understanding of young people's communication needs is a key strength of the home. Personal communication needs are not a barrier to young people participating fully in the home.
- The manager and staff team work tirelessly to ensure that young people receive an excellent standard of care. Staff demonstrate a real sense of ownership of their practice.
- Young people have a strong sense of safety and well-being. They make significant progress in overcoming their past difficulties.
- Young people benefit from excellent relationships with the staff and each other.
- Highly effective relationships with social workers, psychologists and therapists mean that young people receive well-planned care that promotes improved outcomes across all aspects of their lives.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The independent visitor's reports do not include the views of the young people, parents and professionals.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/02/2017	Full	Outstanding
04/08/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
02/03/2016	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- Any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person must make a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. Specifically that they ascertain the views of the young people, parents and professionals on the quality of care. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people receive exceptional care that is making a positive difference to their lives. Staff's strong relationships with social workers, psychologists and therapists mean that young people receive well-planned care that promotes improved outcomes across all aspects of their lives. Young people live in a home that is extremely nurturing and caring. A parent said, 'It's brilliant, [name] has made massive improvements... I have a lot to thank them for.'

Parents and professionals believe that the manager and staff provide care that is above and beyond expectations. One young person who has lived at the home for over 12 months has made demonstrable progress from his initial starting point. He is growing in confidence and developing a positive self-view. A professional said, 'He has come on leaps and bounds... the work with him is amazing, they have really persevered with him.'

During the summer, two brothers moved into the home. This was an extremely positive move, as it meant that they could continue to live together and maintain their strong sibling bond. Both boys are deaf, so the manager has recruited several deaf adults who use sign language to work at the home. This not only provides the boys with excellent role models, but also provides them with effective communication support. The staff have had training in British sign language (BSL) so that they can also communicate with the boys.

Staff are highly nurturing and work to a model of positive parenting. Young people have built strong and trusting relationships with the staff, who listen to them and invest time in them on a daily basis. As a result, young people are provided with the support and assurances needed to help reduce their levels of anxiety and manage their feelings. Alongside this, high levels of therapeutic support provide individual young people with a strong platform that is supporting them to overcome their past difficulties, develop a positive self-view and increase their emotional resilience.

Staff have high aspirations for young people and they place the well-being of each

young person at the centre of their practice, irrespective of the challenges they may present. For example, they have persevered in their pursuit of assessments and treatment for one young person. Consequently, the young person is receiving the help and support needed to improve his mental and emotional health. A professional commented, 'They [staff] have challenged a lot of people... thankfully they have stuck with him.'

Education is well promoted and all young people are in full-time education. Engagement in education has been extremely challenging for some young people; however, they are now achieving 100% attendance. Staff work effectively with educational professionals to ensure that young people fulfil their academic potential. One young person's tutor has recently signed up to a dog-walking scheme and the young person will be joining the tutor as part of his work experience. This will provide the young person with some awareness of pet care when he is considering his future employment. Staff supported one young person to complete his curriculum vitae (CV) and apply for part-time work in the local area. He was successful in getting some part-time work during the summer holidays.

Young people's views are central to the running of the home, and are obtained through day-to-day discussions and individual key-worker sessions. The manager has implemented a weekly consultation tool that is designed to assist the young people in expressing their wishes and feelings. The young people have been encouraged to build positive friendships with each other. One young person has learned some sign language so that he can communicate with the other boys. This enables the young people to share social interactions together. A professional commented that for one of the young people, living with other young people has 'broadened his perspectives'.

The quality of experiences for young people is exceptional. Staff understand that taking part in social activities can have a huge impact on some young people's anxieties. However, they have worked extremely hard to help individual young people overcome their anxieties. Activities include bike rides, trips to the museum, fishing, playing pool and trips to the local farm. One young person has a keen interest in DJing, so the home bought him a mixing deck. They are also looking for a DJing course for him. This helps young people to build confidence in their own abilities and develop their talents.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with their families and friends. When contact needs to be supervised, arrangements can be made within the home to ensure that this is a positive experience for the young person. A young person said, 'The staff are helping me to build my relationship with my mum and dad.' A parent commented, 'They involve me all the time, which I appreciate; this is making my and [name's] relationship better.'

Young people are being well prepared for becoming more independent. For example, they are routinely involved in shopping, helping to prepare meals, doing their laundry and going to the shops independently. A young person said, 'I like cooking, my signature dish is Thai green curry!' This improves their self-confidence and self-esteem.

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

The young people are very positive about the care they receive and say they feel safe living at the home. Young people say that they are confident about talking to staff if they are worried or felt unsafe.

Highly effective planning minimises the risks to young people's safety and well-being. Risks are clearly identified within young people's care plans. Staff have an excellent understanding of young people's risks and vulnerabilities and clear strategies guide staff in supporting young people in a safe way.

Since the last full inspection in February 2017, there have been no episodes of: young people going missing or absent; bullying; physical interventions; sanctions; or safeguarding concerns. The young people benefit from consistent boundaries and structure. High staffing ratios ensure that the young people are given the appropriate levels of support that they need to keep themselves safe.

The recruitment of staff is very thorough, and ensures that all staff are suitable to work with the young people. Safeguarding procedures are robust, and are clearly understood by all of the staff. Safeguarding training is provided for staff and this is regularly updated to ensure that their knowledge remains up to date with current practice.

Young people live in a physically safe environment where they are protected by strong health and safety procedures. Staff carry out regular health and safety checks around the home. Young people and staff regularly practise how to leave the home safely in the event of a fire.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is managed by a suitably qualified and experienced manager. The manager is qualified at NVQ level 4, and is currently undertaking a level 6 management qualification. She provides strong and effective leadership to a highly motivated staff team. The manager and staff can clearly demonstrate the positive impact that living at the home has had on enhancing the lives of the young people.

The manager creates a supportive environment for staff, where they are able to challenge and express their views. Staff confirm that they receive regular and effective supervision. The staff are experienced and they all hold relevant childcare qualifications. Staff spoken to during the inspection clearly enjoy their work, and confirmed that the staff work well together as a team. Comments included, 'I love it, it is a real family environment. It feels like all the pieces of the puzzle are fitting together', and, 'My supervision supports me massively, both formally and informally.'

Research-informed practice continues to develop from a strong and confident base, which is making an exceptional difference to the lives and experiences of the young

people. The manager and staff have undertaken a comprehensive training programme in Positive Behaviour Support (PBS). This is a value-led approach, which is based on the principle that you can teach someone a more effective and positive behaviour response rather than a challenging one. A member of staff said, 'PBS has got us singing off the same hymn sheet. It is underpinning everything we do. It is a brilliant tool.' Another said, 'PBS has made me think so differently, my job is totally different now.'

Staff access a broad range of high-quality training courses to enhance their skills, knowledge and practice in order to meet the challenging needs of the young people. Since the last inspection, staff have completed training in deaf awareness, secondary trauma (advanced), attachment and bonding, and adolescent mental health. In addition, one member of staff is undertaking a teaching assistant qualification level 2 and another is doing a BSL advanced course. This investment in staff development ensures that they are very driven to provide the best possible care for the young people.

The manager has an excellent understanding of the strengths of the home. She makes effective use of both internal and external monitoring to ensure that high standards of care practice are maintained. That said, the independent visitor's reports do not include the views of young people, parents or stakeholders on the conduct of the home. However, this is not impacting negatively on the high standards of care that the young people continue to receive. A real strength of the home is the excellent partnership working with parents and professionals to ensure the best possible outcomes for the young people.

The statement of purpose, which is kept under review, clearly sets out the ethos and objectives of the home. The home is centred on the needs of young people. No requirements or recommendations were made at the last inspection.

The home is furnished to a very high standard. The manager and staff have created a very warm and welcoming home. Young people are able to personalise their bedrooms to reflect their own styles and tastes. This gives the young people a sense of ownership and belonging.

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: SC381531

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Young Alliance Limited

Registered provider address: c/o Richard House, 9 Winckley Square, Preston PR1 3HP

Responsible individual: Andrew O'Reilly

Registered manager: Elizabeth Hiley

Inspector

Michelle Bacon: social care inspector

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