

1255748

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 provides care and accommodation for up to five young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 14 to 15 November 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: This is the home's first inspection since registration.

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:

- Young people have good experiences during their time at the home. The house feels like a home and is a happy place to live in.
- Young people benefit from a kind and nurturing approach from staff. This approach works well because some young people have suffered traumatic experiences in their life.

- Careful and sensitive work makes a positive difference to young people. They receive help to come to terms with what has happened to them in their past.
- Staff excel at making sure that young people feel valued and cherished. As a result, young people's confidence and self-esteem improves.
- Risk to young people is reduced. There is a reduction in self-harm and instances of going missing from the home.
- All young people are in education which suits their needs well. Attendance and attainment is good, due to staff having a highly organised approach.
- Young people's behaviour improves. They learn about how to manage their anger. As a result, they often feel better about themselves.
- The acting manager's performance is very strong. He motivates his team well to provide good quality care. Staff feel empowered and enabled, and all speak very highly of his approach.
- Staff innovate and bring new ideas all the time. In particular, they are creative about how to deliver bespoke support to young people in times of crisis.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Recruitment records are not all kept at the home. There is a risk of important information and checks being overlooked because the manager cannot monitor these effectively.
- When young people are physically held by staff, they are not routinely given the opportunity to have their say about staff practice.

Recent inspection history

This is the first inspection.

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

Recommendations

- As set out in regulations 31—33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
In particular, this relates to professional references for staff.
- Any child who has been restrained should be given the opportunity to express their feelings about their experience of the restraint as soon as is practical. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.60)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people settle quickly into their home life. Their experiences are enjoyable and the home is a happy place to live in. Social workers are particularly positive about the progress young people make. One social worker said: 'They have supported the young person with everything. I have no concerns.'

Admissions to the home are carefully planned. Each new young person's needs are carefully considered against the existing group of young people. Careful risk assessment ensures that young people are able to make good progress from the moment they arrive. One young person reported being surprised that the home is so good, after feeling very anxious to start with.

When young people move out, staff make sure that there is a positive ending for them. Photo albums, cards and messages are kept to give to young people as a parting gift. Staff invest time in making sure that placement endings are as positive as they can be. Equally, when staff leave thought goes into how this might make young people feel. When one member of staff left recently, they wrote letters to the young people. Young people are likely to feel greatly cherished by staff, even if staff leave.

Staff have very positive relationships with young people. They use a range of skills and qualities to build these relationships quickly. Staff understand the importance of each young person having a trusted adult to talk to. They are creative in finding ways to help young people to make sense of their past experiences and the reasons that they are in care. They sensitively support young people to understand that what has happened to them in the past is not their fault. This helps young people to come to terms with their past traumas.

Staff go out of their way to make sure that young people's requests to see their family are facilitated. Important relationships are maintained and rebuilt. This means that young people are more likely to have their family and friends to turn to for support, both now and in their future.

Each young person's arrangements for education are individualised to meet their specific needs. All young people engage well in their education. Given their complex needs and starting points, this is a very positive achievement for them. Staff work closely with schools. There is a clear focus on young people's emotional well-being, reducing their anxiety and supporting them to learn. There is a designated education co-ordinator in the home, who is impressive and tenacious in his approach to education. He and the acting manager know that young people deserve the best support, so that they can make up for education missed in the past. This approach really does give young people the boost they need to improve their attainment.

Staff are extremely reflective about young people's progress. They look for ways to improve their progress in every aspect. In particular, young people's health is improved because of this approach. For example, one young person has recently been struggling to sleep, so staff worked with the young person to draw up a comprehensive self-help plan. Within a short space of time, there has been a lot of improvement. This has enabled the young person to engage more positively in their education and in their home life, because they are healthier and feel better. Generally, health is seen as very important and young people learn about maintaining good health. One young person said: 'I try to get to the gym three times a week. Staff come with me.'

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

Young people are well protected in this home. Staff listen to their views and concerns about bullying and always respond appropriately. Contentious issues between individuals and within the group are managed well. Young people learn about how to get along with others and about acceptable behaviour towards one another. At the same time, they are very well protected by staff.

Young people who have been at risk of child sexual exploitation in the past and who have been regularly missing from home are significantly safer than they were before. Their episodes of missing from home drastically reduce soon after their admission. Young people spoken with during the inspection are pleased that they feel safer than they did before. Their missing from home episodes reduce because they enjoy their time at the home. Young people feel secure in the knowledge that staff care about them. One young person said: 'They constantly ring me, if they don't know where I am.'

Relevant outside agencies regularly support young people with their personal safety issues. For example, there is individual work with young people to raise their awareness of how they could be sexually exploited. This support is additional to the already high-quality support given by staff.

Young people's self-esteem and confidence improves. This helps them to feel better about themselves and has a significant and positive impact on their risk-taking behaviour. In particular, self-harming behaviour reduces. One young person reflected on their previous self-harming behaviour saying: 'This home is good for me. I have less self-harm.'

Staffing levels did impact on young people's behaviour over the summer months. There was an unsettled period when there was a higher number of incidents of challenging behaviour. However, in recent weeks young people's behaviour has settled down. This coincides with new staff coming into post and good staff development. Instances of more challenging behaviour are extremely well recorded. Records 'tell the story' of the event, providing a clear picture for monitoring purposes. All young people are making progress in managing their behaviour.

When physical intervention is used, this is seen as a last resort and is used to protect individuals. Young people are extremely well supported after any such incidents. However, they are not routinely asked for their opinion on the actual measure used. This is an opportunity lost for further developing safe practice in this area.

The acting manager was not able to easily find information to show that all staff have been recruited using safer recruitment practice. This information is not routinely available in the home for monitoring purposes. There is a potential for shortfalls in recruitment practice to be missed because leaders and managers cannot easily monitor these records.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Over the summer period, there were a lot of staff shortages. This resulted in a peak in significant events at the home. However, this situation has been rectified by recruiting more staff. There are five new staff in place, so this team is clearly still developing. However, this improving picture has already led to the home being significantly more settled. Professionals spoken with during the inspection made very positive comments about staff. One professional said: 'Staff are brilliant.' Another professional commented: 'They like the children and it shows.'

The registered manager left the home in October 2017 and a new, acting manager is in place. He has already applied to Ofsted to be the registered manager, and there has been no gap in the leadership of this home. Given the difficult summer months, where staff morale was low, it is very significant that the acting manager has already enthused staff once again. One staff member commented that the acting manager's approach is 'empowering'.

Staff have been very well supported after a difficult period in the summer months. They have regular meetings with the acting manager, and their performance is very closely monitored through high-quality induction, training and support. All staff report very positively on the current strong management arrangements. This is a home that is improving all the time.

Young people, staff and professionals have got great confidence in the acting manager. He has a very young-person-centred approach and always has their best interests at heart. He is a visible manager and has made it his business to be very involved with young people's care. When young people are not getting the service they need or deserve from other professionals, he speaks out for them. He always strives for the best for young people in his care. He advocates for young people and supports them in progressing any complaints. Young people learn that they should have their say. They learn how to stand up for themselves and how to deal with disappointment.

The acting manager has developed very good working relationships with other professionals. There is regular contact with school staff, social workers and other agencies. This means that good decisions can be made by professionals, based on high quality, clear information from the home.

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: 1255748

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: Post vacant

Inspector

Caroline Brailsford, social care inspector

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