

1250287

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

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

Inspection dates: 28 to 29 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 **requires improvement to be 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: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people enjoy warm and trusting relationships with child-focused, dedicated staff.
- Strong routines and boundaries provide young people with the stability and security that they need to make progress.
- Proactive staff encourage and support young people to engage in education and improve their self-confidence, behaviour, emotional and physical well-being.

- Staff and young people have fun together, both in the home and outside, accessing a range of stimulating activities.
- Staff keep young people safe and help them to understand how to keep themselves safe.
- Young people become increasingly safe in placement.
- Highly trained and skilled staff work in close collaboration with a range of agencies to keep young people safe.
- When young people go missing, staff try to find them and work with the police to locate and return them safely.
- The registered manager has been on sick leave and the deputy and regional managers have supported the home in her absence. Standards of care have remained consistent and young people have continued to benefit from the supportive staff team.
- Staff receive regular supervision and team meetings when they can reflect on practice and suggest improvements for the running of the home.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Staff and the managers should be more proactive in identifying poor practice in other professionals and challenging this when the needs of young people are not being met.
- Young people's individual risk assessments do not evidence when they have been regularly reviewed and updated, or that staff have read them.
- Managers do not monitor and review the effectiveness of sanctions.
- Some staff training is out of date.
- Young people's case records are not always complete or signed and dated.
- While the independent visitor has undertaken monthly visits to the home, the reports have not been provided to Ofsted.
- The home could benefit from the decoration being updated more rapidly and photographs of young people and staff being displayed. This would create a more welcoming physical environment for children and staff.

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>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must ensure that if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5(c))</p>	12/01/2017
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12(1) and (2)(a)(i))</p> <p>This is with particular reference to regularly reviewing, signing and dating young people's individual risk assessments and evidencing that all staff have read them.</p>	12/01/2017
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that ensures that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13(1) and (2)(d))</p>	12/01/2017
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that requires the registered person to 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>This is with particular reference to reviewing and monitoring the effectiveness of sanctions used with young people.</p>	12/01/2017

<p>The registered person must maintain records (“case records”) for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36(1)(a)(b)(c))</p>	<p>12/01/2017</p>
<p>The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children’s home at least once each month. The independent person must produce a report about a visit (“the independent person’s report”) and must provide a copy of the independent person’s report to HMCI. (Regulation 44 (1)(4)(7)(a))</p>	<p>12/01/2017</p>

Recommendations

- Staff should seek to meet the child’s basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met – doing so is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child and value them as an individual. (Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards page 15, paragraph 3.7)

This is with particular reference to speeding up the decoration of the home and personalising it with photographs of young people and staff.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people are happy in placement and form warm and trusting relationships with child-focused staff. Young people benefit from sharing evening meals at the dining table with each other and staff, where they share banter and chat about the day. The relaxed atmosphere created during meal times is a real strength of the home. They also have fun together, and with staff, in a range of activities including cooking, going to the local leisure centre and trips out, most recently to a Christmas market. One young person is teaching another young person to play pool. Young people are also involved in the local community and are cooking food to sell on a stall to raise money for a local school.

Young people feel that staff listen to them. They attend the regular young people’s meetings, where they talk about what went well or did not go well during the week. They raise any concerns they may have and plan activities and menus. When significant issues arise in the home such as bullying, staff support young people to have ‘circle time’, when they get together to discuss feelings and try to resolve these issues. Young people also have the opportunities to complete a child- friendly questionnaire about how they are feeling and say if they feel that staff listen to them and care about them.

These positive relationships mean that staff can support young people to make progress in their education, ability to manage their emotions and behaviour, physical well-being

and self-confidence. One young person has significantly reduced his smoking, another has become less anxious about food and a particularly withdrawn young person has opened up and joins in conversations. Disturbed sleep patterns have improved for one young person, and others have made significant improvements in attending and making good progress at school. Young people regularly go to see the in-house therapist, who is at the home for three days a week and has an open door policy. Young people enjoy talking to her and engage in play therapy in her cosy, welcoming office. Feedback from young people, family members and professionals is very positive, and one parent said of her son, 'It's the best thing that's happened to him. They are absolutely fantastic with him. It's an amazing place.'

While the home is gradually being redecorated, this is taking some time. Young people would benefit from the hallway and stairwell being completed more rapidly, and photographs of staff and young people put up would make the home even more welcoming.

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

Highly trained and committed staff keep young people safe, and young people become increasingly safe in placement. Young people who regularly went missing before they were placed have significantly reduced this behaviour. When young people do go missing, staff respond rapidly and appropriately by searching for them and working with other agencies to locate and return them safely. Young people who have a history of involvement with gangs and drugs no longer engage in these activities and are much safer. None of the young people are currently assessed as being at risk of child sexual exploitation, but staff are trained, knowledgeable and vigilant with regard to possible risks.

There has been an unsettled period recently when one young person has presented very challenging and violent behaviour in the home. Staff have protected and supported the other young people during incidents, and young people say that they have always felt safe in the home.

Staff work closely and effectively with drug and alcohol workers, youth offending services, social workers and the police. They make appropriate referrals to support agencies to help young people learn how to keep themselves safe and reduce risks. Positive relationships with staff, the in-house therapist and focused key-work sessions enable young people to get better at recognising their emotions and self-regulating their risk-taking behaviours.

Impact assessments are analytical, and young people's risk assessments and behaviour support plans are detailed and relevant. Plans include positive strategies for staff to use with young people in order to meet their individual safeguarding needs and de-escalate negative behaviour.

However, while the staff are able to evidence their knowledge of the current risks and risk management plans for each young person, the written plans lack dates and

signatures to confirm when they were updated and that staff have read them. Another area for improvement is that safeguarding training for one staff member is out of date and she needs to undertake the refresher training as soon as possible.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager holds a level 5 qualification in leadership and management and has several years' experience of working in children's residential care. Staff either hold their level 3 diploma or are working towards it. Most staff are first aid trained.

The registered manager has been on sick leave for several weeks and the role has been covered by the deputy manager and regional manager. This temporary situation has contributed to a number of areas for improvement. The covering managers have ensured that young people are kept safe, are happy and settled in the home, and are making progress. However, there has been a lack of managerial monitoring of systems such as the relevance and effectiveness of sanctions given to young people. Not all staff training is up to date. Young people's files lack some information which needs to be pursued with placing local authorities, and documents need to be more clearly dated and signed. While the home has had regular visits from an independent visitor, managers have not ensured that the reports have been sent to Ofsted. Where staff have observed that other professionals are not meeting the needs of a young person, this has not been highlighted to the managers, and the professionals have not been challenged. The deputy manager intends to apply to become a registered manager, in addition to the existing registered manager, which would enable the home to have stable, consistent managerial input and presence.

Despite the challenges of an absent registered manager, staff feel supported by managers and benefit from team meetings, therapy meetings, staff supervision and ongoing training. The team is working effectively with young people, family members and professionals to identify and meet the needs of young people. The home is well-staffed and organised, and staff provide young people with consistent boundaries and routines. Staff understand and promote the positive ethos of the home, with the child as the focus. Staff have aspirations for young people and identify opportunities for them, such as researching membership of the local cadets and boxing club.

Feedback from family members and professionals regarding how the home is managed is very positive. The youth offending service worker for one young person said, 'The staff are very, very professional.' He emphasises that staff always update him on any issues regarding the young person and says that staff are always proactive and very positive.

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: 1250287

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Responsible individual: Farzana Khan

Registered manager: June Johnson

Inspector

Louise Whittle, social care inspector

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