

SC022448

Registered provider: Nugent Care

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The centre is operated by a voluntary organisation. It is registered as a secure children's home and is approved by the Secretary of State to provide secure care and accommodation. Education is provided on-site in dedicated facilities.

The centre can accommodate 12 young people, irrespective of gender, from 10 to 17 years of age, in two purpose-built living units. Admission of a young person under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

Inspection date: 23 January 2018

Judgement at last inspection: good

Date of last inspection: 4 April 2017

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection.
At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.

The committed and proactive manager has worked extremely hard with her leadership and staff team to meet all of the requirements and recommendations raised at the last inspection. This not only demonstrates a capacity to improve, but that the proposed new changes in management structure, including deploying staff in these roles on an 'act up' basis, is having a positive effect on the well-being and outcomes for the young people.

However, since the last inspection, there has been an increase in self-harming behaviours for one young person. It was acknowledged that for this young person that

Christmas and New Year was a particularly difficult period. During this time, there were two occasions when protocol and advice were not followed completely and some harmful behaviours were not prevented, although the young person's safety and welfare were attended to immediately. In addition, a breach of some young people's confidentiality occurred when another young person was able to obtain a 'handover sheet', which had been left by a staff member in a unit. The managers have investigated and robustly reviewed staffing arrangements, practice and policy. Furthermore, the staff have shown admirable dedication in undertaking sensitive personal checks to prevent the opportunity for young people to re-swallow items, such as batteries. Nevertheless, these incidents would not have occurred if there had been clearer parameters on what could be given to young people as gifts or taken into units.

Much more stringent recruitment procedures have been developed and applied. This has resulted in the selection of fewer staff members. Those appointed are of a high calibre and have the correct qualifications and skills necessary to meet the diverse needs of the young people. An increase in salary for all staff members reflects the commitment the organisation has to ensuring continuous improvement in the quality of its workforce.

Until the home has recruited to all of the vacant posts, there are occasions when there is still a dependence upon agency staff members. The implementation of new partnership arrangements with a specific agency is intended to ensure that only workers with appropriate experience are put forward to work at the home.

Good new processes ensure that all staff are able to attend regular team meetings where they are kept fully informed as to the young people's needs, as well as changes at the home. For example, group discussions about which consequences are more effective for individual young people and the use of restorative practice help to ensure consistency. The staff team members are using the lessons that they are learning in their supervision sessions and at team meetings to ensure that careful and objective information recorded in the young people's records will be helpful to them now, and if they wish to refer to them again in the future.

A much-improved monitoring report produced by the manager under Regulation 45 now provides a comprehensive picture of the care provided, what is working well and the areas for development that are required. The views of the young people, parents, professionals and staff are evident throughout and influence care planning. For example, at the staff team's suggestion, a review of bedtime routines resulted in a shift pattern change, which was effective in reducing stress for the young people and improving staff working conditions.

Staff continue to communicate well with the young people and listen to their views, wishes and feelings. Formal consultation with the young people has now also improved through the weekly house meetings or 'forums'. The recorded minutes reflect the young people's participation and discussion about issues that they raise. The quality of the record is variable but generally the records reflect positive and engaging discussions with the young people. The young people continue to be included in a range of matters affecting them. These include placement planning and preparation for review meetings,

as well as participation in the interview process for new staff. As a result, the young people feel valued and heard, which enhances their self-esteem and well-being.

Much improved sanctions are restorative in nature and enable the young people to understand the impact their behaviours can have on others. This good practice empowers the young people as they reflect upon their actions and develop a greater awareness of consequences. This will support them not only while at the home but also importantly once they return to their communities. A social worker reported, 'I have no concerns about the placement. The young person made excellent progress in all areas. She has been really well supported and is a different person now. Her mum says I have my real [Name of young person] back.'

There have been a number of improvements in the menu planning and the provision of meals for the young people, which take into account their wishes and preferences. The newly appointed chef has worked with staff and the young people to ensure that the menus are varied, nutritional and provide a range of options at each mealtime. However, the chef and staff have to work hard to ensure that the young people do not constantly eat high-fat foods that are familiar to them. Some of the young people have responded well to encouragement in their approach to eating and exercise but some are fixed in their habits and are resistant to change. Managers and staff have set health promotion objectives and have organised sessions in education and enrichment activities to address this more consistently with all of the young people. The young people's health and well-being improve as they embrace these new opportunities.

As recommended at the last inspection, routines are now in place to ensure that the external garden areas are regularly and thoroughly checked prior to the young people entering those grounds. As a result, the young people are able to enjoy activities in the fresh air safely.

There have been a number of complaints raised by the young people since the last inspection. The figures reflect a relatively high number of young people living at the home during this time due to the purpose and function of the home and a number of short-term placements. The complaints process is child-friendly. It is easy to access and easily understood. It is proactively encouraged by staff, managers, advocates and the independent visitor. It is underpinned by the principle of listening to and acting on the views of young people. This means that it is used for a range of complaints from minor issues that are resolved almost immediately to more concerning issues that can take a number of meetings to resolve. Staff follow a clear complaints policy. Records are maintained of each step of the process and there are trackers of each month's complaints that are monitored by managers. The records always include the young person's response/s and are not signed off until the young person is informed of the outcome. There have been creative solutions in response to complaints, such as inviting a young person to the staff meeting to discuss the experience of complaining and learning from this. The young people grow in the confidence to express any dissatisfaction in a positive manner as a result.

The young people continue to make very good progress following their admission to the

home. Staff understand the importance of engaging with the young people quickly and to formulate plans and objectives with them as soon as possible. The young people engage in a series of planned and individualised direct work sessions that help them to understand what brought them to a secure setting and how to deal with their behaviours and actions. This will help to prepare them to return successfully and safely to the community. For example, one young person proudly showed the inspector a workbook she was working on with staff, which reflected all the areas highlighted in her placement plan. There is good use of mobility trips outside of the secure environment, including for the young people to buy cultural food of their choice, to help the young people to prepare for moving on. A young person said, 'It has been good for me being here as I can believe in myself now and trust myself. I have learned to protect myself thanks to staff and not to be too open with people.'

The young people at this home have a range of complex needs. Care planning benefits from effective multi-agency assessments and interventions. The young people's plans include health, education and family information and clear recommendations and goals to support the young person to make progress. Since the last inspection, a more child-centred care plan has been developed, which captures the young person's views on each aspect of their care plan and identifies what needs to change. This links to direct work with individual key staff to address behaviours that require change. The young people benefit from structured routines and explicit expectations from the start. The young people have made progress in education, which enhances their interest in learning and future employment opportunities. A young person said, 'I think the home is outstanding and an 11 out of 10. When I came, I was worried, but I can have a laugh with the staff.'

All the young people have detailed, individual risk and behaviour management plans. These are promptly updated following any new information. Staff liaise with health professionals regularly and the young people receive direct work and support. Staff have weekly meetings and daily handovers discussing the young people's needs. Young people are supported to feel safe, to share information and to agree their own safety plan. As a result, some young people feel more able to express their concerns about their emotional and mental health and some concerning behaviours may and do increase, such as self-harming behaviours. A social worker reported, 'It was clear from my observations, meetings, updates and reviews that the staff at [Home's name] went above and beyond for [Name of young person] in the care that they provided this young person. I would highly recommend this resource to others.'

Resettlement is very much on the agenda from the beginning of the placement. Staff engage with a range of professionals to ensure that planning commences as soon as is practically possible. Where partnerships have been less effective in transition planning, meetings and discussions take place to reflect on this and to ensure that improvements are made. Staff assess the safety and impact of young people spending time in the community, prior to their move. Young people visit and find out about the placement they are moving on to and this reduces anxieties and helps young people to experience positive transitions. Managers will also take up any issues that they are concerned about with placing agencies in writing and will escalate the matter if required. There are well-embedded practices in place to ensure, as far as possible, that the home advocates on

behalf of young people. A social worker reported, 'Good weekly contact, good in terms of keeping me informed. They addressed her child therapy needs well and advocate well on her behalf. I'm happy to recommend [Home's name] to other colleagues.'

The young people often write to staff when they have left the home and thank them for the care and work that staff have done with them during their stay, such is their attachment to the home. The young people acknowledge how their behaviour impacted upon the staff caring for them. A young person wrote, 'You and your staff never gave up on me and kept coming back to help me over and over again. I've been really horrible at times but you've never held a grudge against me. I never thought I'd say this but I love [Home's name] and it's my home and you lot are my family and I'll never forget it.'

Staff work well with a range of health professionals and specialists to help meet the complex health and emotional needs of the young people. For example, the home has worked effectively and successfully with several young people to enable them to manage their diabetes. The input from primary and mental health staff at the home is effective and supportive to young people and staff.

Good partnership working between the manager and the designated officer ensures that any allegations about staff are managed swiftly and efficiently. Placing authorities and the regulator are kept informed about all concerns, thus providing the opportunity for an overview. As a result, the young people are safeguarded.

There have been several issues with aspects of the building in recent months. These are being addressed as quickly and effectively as possible. A refurbishment plan for the building is beginning to take shape, which includes the upgrade of young people's bedrooms and their en-suite facilities.

The management team is in the process of introducing a new 'Introduction and Direct Work Pack', which covers the first four weeks of a young person's time at the home. This excellent new document was developed together with the young people and partner agencies. Once completed, it will provide the young people with a comprehensive, brightly coloured and individualised book to keep, which shows them what they were involved in and the progress that they made. These lessons can be taken with the young people as they move on, therefore enhancing their adult lives and future life chances.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/04/2017	Full	Good
01/11/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
10/05/2016	Full	Requires improvement
25/11/2015	Full	Good

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

Statutory requirement

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>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(2)(f))</p> <p>In particular, develop and enforce a suitable policy that covers gifts and documentation to be taken into the units.</p>	28/02/2018

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.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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: SC022448

Provision sub-type: Secure unit

Registered provider: Nugent Care

Registered provider address: 99 Edge Lane, Edge Hill, Liverpool L7 2PE

Responsible individual: Gary Thistlewood

Registered manager: Marie Higgins

Inspectors

Ann-Marie Born, social care inspector

Linda Christie, HMI

Cathey Moriarty, social care inspector

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