

SC431806

Registered provider: SWAAY Child and Adolescent Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and operated by a private organisation that specialises in the assessment and treatment of male adolescents who have experienced some form of abusive situation. The overall aim of the service is to offer four young people the opportunity to embark on specialised educational and therapeutic training programmes within a safe, supportive and nurturing environment.

Inspection dates: 24 to 25 January 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

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: 24 August 2016

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 highly effective manager consistently applies the organisation's quality of care monitoring systems and takes action to address any shortfalls in the standard of care being provided.
- Staff have the skills to build secure, trusting relationships with young people. This results in young people having the confidence to share their concerns and anxieties and to seek support when needed.
- Professionals and young people are fully engaged in the care planning process. This results in the effective implementation of personalised strategies for caring for each young person.
- There is a strong focus on ensuring that young people have the knowledge and skills required to keep themselves safe and avoid becoming exploited.
- Young people engage well in specialised therapeutic work and their emotional well-being improves.
- Staff are sensitive to young people's needs and use creative approaches to promote good communication.
- Effective communication between care and teaching staff maximises the potential for young people to engage positively with their education.
- Emerging child protection concerns are quickly identified and effective action is taken to prevent young people from coming to harm.
- Individualised behaviour management strategies are clearly defined and consistently implemented.
- Staff and young people take pride in the home and a strong sense of belonging has been cultivated.
- The achievements of young people are consistently recognised and celebrated. This has a positive impact on young people's self-esteem.
- The health needs of young people are given high priority. Healthy lifestyles are promoted and young people are supported to take regular exercise.
- A creative approach is taken to ensuring that young people feel welcome when they are first admitted. Young people settle quickly into the daily routines.

- The professional development of staff is promoted and there is a consistent and collaborative approach to meeting the needs of young people.
- The registered manager is committed to working in partnership with external agencies and effective professional working relationships have been established.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The quality of impact risk assessments undertaken prior to a young person being admitted to the home needs to be improved.
- The agendas for staff supervision should provide an opportunity for reflection on young people's perceptions of their relationships with staff.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/08/2016	Full	Outstanding
14/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13/10/2015	Full	Outstanding

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
Specifically, ensure that pre-admission impact risk assessments consider the likely impact on both the children already living at the home and the child being admitted.
- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
Specifically, ensure that the relationships between members of staff and children are always considered during practice supervision meetings.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The young people at this home build secure, trusting relationships with staff. This enhances the young people's sense of security and stability and creates an environment in which they can begin to recover from past traumatic events and express their fears and anxieties about the future. Staff are familiar with the individual needs of each young person. Staff communicate sensitively, demonstrating respect for young people while maintaining boundaries and challenging unacceptable behaviour.

The home is managed exceptionally well. Consequently, young people engage positively with daily routines and have a clear understanding of expectations of their behaviour. As a result, the frustrations associated with communal living are minimised. Peer relationships are good and staff deal effectively with any issues that could result in conflict. Frequent house meetings provide opportunities for young people to consider and reflect on the views of others and to learn how to compromise in order to resolve their disagreements.

Young people are encouraged and supported to play an active role in the care planning process. Consequently, young people's views are taken into account when developing strategies to meet their individual care needs and to promote positive behaviour. Young people are also engaged in setting achievable targets in their care plans and reviewing

the progress that they have made. As a result of participating in these processes, young people develop the confidence to express their views on how they can best be supported. One young person was able to provide the inspector with a clear description of the help and support that he needs to enhance his life chances.

All young people have a place at the organisation's school and attendance is good. This is a positive achievement for these young people as many struggled to engage productively with education prior to moving to the home. This is partly attributable to the effective communication that takes place between education and teaching staff. Young people are supported to make applications to further education colleges in good time. One young person has already received a conditional offer of a college placement for September 2018.

A strength of the organisation is the provision of specialist psychiatric and psychological interventions to meet the specific needs of the young people. There is a highly developed therapeutic programme providing young people with individual and group therapy. All young people at the home are engaging well with this provision. As a result, they are becoming more emotionally aware and resilient. Both professionals and parents commented on how young people are more in touch with their feelings and more able to express their emotions. Over time, young people become less anxious and they begin to manage their frustrations and anxieties more effectively.

Staff from the organisation's therapeutic team are fully engaged in supporting care staff to develop personalised care plans. As a result, the day-to-day care being provided enhances the progress that young people make in therapy, particularly in relation to building their self-esteem. Staff recognise and celebrate each and every achievement made by a young person, no matter how small this might be. For example, young people receive certificates or other rewards for conquering a particular fear or anxiety. Young people are supported and encouraged to develop their interests and skills outside the home, and this strengthens their self-esteem and confidence. One young person takes great pride in the fact that he is now a valued member of a local community football team.

Effective measures are in place to ensure that young people remain in good physical health and learn the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. A parent expressed the view that staff go 'above and beyond' to ensure that young people's medical needs are met. Potential medical ailments are quickly identified by staff, who are then persistent in terms of ensuring that thorough health checks are undertaken. Young people take regular exercise and staff identify solutions where there are barriers to young people taking part in their chosen sport or activity.

Great care is taken to ensure that a young person's admission to the home is a positive experience. This includes pre-admission visits and overnight stays, during which young people are encouraged to ask questions and express their fears. Creative approaches are used to ensure that young people feel welcomed in the home. For example, in one case, the young people's guide to the home was produced in comic book style, reflecting the personal interests of the young person. This sensitive approach has positive results. The

young people consistently told the inspector that although arriving at the home was a new and scary experience, the support from staff and the welcome that they received from other young people soon helped them to settle. The process also ensures that young people are provided with the information that they need to understand daily routines and how they can resolve problems. For example, all young people know how to make a complaint. One young person who has used the complaints process said that it had been an effective way to resolve a problem.

Managers and staff take steps to ensure that young people's contact with their family members is planned in advance and that it is supported by staff who have the skills to communicate sensitively and prioritise the safety and well-being of all those involved. This helps to reduce the level of anxiety that some young people experience during family visits. Parents spoken to during this inspection said that staff keep them informed of the progress that their young people are making, and that they feel included when plans are reviewed or amended. Where appropriate, family members are included in therapeutic work that is focused on rebuilding relationships that have previously been difficult.

The welfare and individual needs of young people are consistently prioritised. Staff are focused on helping young people to achieve the best possible outcomes. Both staff and young people take pride in the home, and there is a strong sense of belonging to a supportive community. As a result, young people are making very good progress in all aspects of their lives. This is reflected in the observations of a social worker who said, 'I believe he [young person] has a chance now. This was not the case before he moved to this home.'

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

Practice relating to the protection of young people is highly effective. The quality of the relationships that staff develop with young people is a significant protective factor. Young people's trust in the staff who care for them ensures that they develop the confidence to share their anxieties and begin to reflect on past traumatic experiences. A social worker commented that this had resulted in 'many doors being opened' in relation to the work that can now be undertaken with a young person.

Staff quickly identify safeguarding concerns, such as the potential for young people to harm themselves. The relationships between young people are carefully monitored and swift action is taken when a young person's behaviour gives cause for concern. When child protection concerns are identified, consultation takes place with professionals from within the organisation, and with the young person's placing authority. This results in timely interventions to reduce the potential for the young person to come to harm. Detailed records are kept of all actions that are taken in response to safeguarding matters.

Staff have a detailed knowledge of each young person's vulnerabilities and associated risks. Individual risk assessments are strong. These assessments clearly specify the measures that staff will take to ensure that the potential for young people to come to

harm is minimised. Young people engage well in key-work sessions where their unsafe behaviours are discussed openly. This ensures that young people remain familiar with the strategies that they have learned, and this helps them to keep themselves safe. There is an excellent range of resources available to assist young people to communicate effectively with their key worker.

Managers and staff are acutely aware of the young people's vulnerability in relation to all forms of exploitation. Young people engage well in work that is undertaken to raise their awareness of the risks associated with accessing the internet. This helps to ensure that they have the skills needed to keep themselves safe online. Staff liaise with teachers from the organisation's school, so that they know how young people have engaged in lessons that are focused on internet safety and the risk of becoming sexually exploited. The results of assessments relating to young people's awareness of personal safety that are undertaken in school are used to plan key-work sessions in the home. The registered manager demonstrates an awareness of particular areas around the locality of the home, where young people might be at increased risk of exploitation.

There are no current concerns regarding young people going missing from the home. Established procedures are in place for staff to follow should this become an issue. Positive working relationships have been established with the police. This has resulted in officers coming to the home to engage in dialogue with young people who have demonstrated behaviours that could result in them being arrested, if they were to continue.

Plans and strategies for promoting positive behaviour are highly effective. This is partly attributable to young people being fully engaged in developing the strategies. For example, young people are consulted about their preferences in terms of physical comfort, should they become distressed. Individual behaviour management plans clearly identify the circumstances in which young people are likely to demonstrate challenging behaviour, and the changes that staff may observe in the young person's demeanour at such times. The plans contain clear strategies for staff to follow in order to de-escalate potentially volatile situations.

Since the last full inspection in August 2016, there have been no occasions when physical intervention has been used to manage a young person's behaviour. The organisation is currently in the process of introducing a new training programme for staff, so that they are competent to use physical interventions if this became necessary. The registered manager recognises this as a positive development. There is a strong focus on the use of restorative approaches to promote positive behaviour, and to address the negative consequences that challenging behaviour has on the group of young people and staff.

There is a rigorous approach to ensuring that recruitment procedures are safe. All necessary checks are undertaken prior to staff being employed, and references are thoroughly scrutinised. The interview process includes a thorough analysis of the candidate's motivation for working with vulnerable young people. It also examines the candidate's potential for building supportive relationships with young people, based on

the organisation's practice model.

An effective system for monitoring health and safety matters is in place, and any potential hazards are quickly rectified. Young people are given advice and guidance on how to avoid accidents around the home and staff ensure that the steps outlined in health and safety risk assessments are adhered to. This approach ensures that young people live in a safe environment.

The commitment of managers and staff to making sure that young people are protected from harm is embedded in practice. This has a positive impact on the young people, who all said that they feel safe in the home and would not hesitate to speak to staff about any worries or concerns that they may have. This sense of security underpins the young people's willingness to confront past negative experiences and focus on addressing unsafe behaviours.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home has a registered manager who has the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to ensure that consistently high standards of care are maintained. She holds the level 4 diploma in leadership and management for care service and health and social care, and is studying for the level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare. The deputy manager is equally effective and committed to ensuring that vulnerable young people benefit from living in a well-managed home.

The high standard of care that is provided is partly attributable to the consistent implementation of effective quality of care monitoring systems. The registered manager analyses and evaluates all serious incidents and identifies where practice or strategies for supporting young people require further development. There is good management oversight of all log books and records pertaining to the care of young people. Any recommendations that are made by the home's independent visitor are shared with the staff team and these are acted upon in a timely way.

Staff are supported to reflect on their practice and to consider the effectiveness of the strategies that are in place to support young people. This is done in team de-briefs at the end of each shift, in team meetings and during individual supervision sessions. The standard of staff supervision is good, particularly in relation to identifying emerging safeguarding concerns. However, on one occasion, an issue relating to the relationship between a member of staff and a young person was not formally discussed during the supervision process.

Staff are supportive of one another and work collaboratively as a team. They demonstrate commitment and a sense of pride in the standard of care being provided. Staff are consistently focused on supporting young people to achieve the best possible outcomes and their optimism and enthusiasm has a positive influence on the young people.

The registered manager promotes the professional development of staff. For example,

one member of staff is currently being supported to take a more active role in the six-monthly quality of care review. The organisation provides a comprehensive training programme. This includes training on the organisation's practice model. All staff have either completed this training or have been booked on to a course. All mandatory training is completed within the required timeframe.

Leaders and managers maintain oversight of young people's placement plans. These plans are maintained to an exceptionally high standard. They clearly identify young people's needs and reflect the advice given by the organisation's psychology and therapy professionals on how these can best be met. The plans contain a running record of young people's progress and identify the areas where young people need additional support. Clear, achievable goals are set in consultation with young people. This helps young people to invest in the care planning process. The plans identify tasks that staff should undertake in order to support young people to meet their goals. This maximises the potential for young people to succeed.

There is a thorough and inclusive admissions process. Provision is made for the views of professionals representing the education, psychology and care sectors of the organisation to be taken into account. An assessment is undertaken of each young person's ability to engage with the services being provided, and this reduces the likelihood of future placement breakdowns. The views of family members are also taken into account and young people have the opportunity to visit the home and ask questions about life in the home, prior to admission.

The admissions process considers the likely impact that the new admission will have on other young people at the home, and how the needs and behaviour of others could impact on the new admission. However, practice could be further improved in this area. In one case, not all relevant information was given due consideration during the impact assessment process. A young person living at the home was said still to be at the 'settling in' stage. An impact risk assessment undertaken at this time did not fully consider how the young person who was settling in might be affected by a new young person moving in at that time.

The registered manager has developed highly effective working relationships with professionals and parents. A social worker praised the ability of the registered manager to appropriately challenge the perceptions of professionals and parents when needed, without upsetting or alienating anyone. This social worker described the home as 'the most well-functioning home I have ever seen'. Professionals feel included in the care planning process and are appreciative of leaders' and managers' commitment to working in partnership. Parents spoken to during this inspection said that they are kept well informed and expressed high levels of confidence in the ability of managers and staff to meet the needs of their young people.

The physical environment is maintained to a high standard and provides a homely, comfortable atmosphere for the young people. Throughout the home there are photographs of young people taking part in various activities, and the young people have personalised their bedrooms according to their particular preferences. There is a well-

equipped games room providing a range of indoor activities to stimulate young people's imagination, enabling them to make the most of their leisure time.

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: SC431806

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: SWAAY Child and Adolescent Services Limited

Registered provider address: 591 London Road, Sutton, Surrey SM3 9AG

Responsible individual: Gerard Berry

Registered manager: Sasha Austria

Inspector

Stephen Collett: social care inspector

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