

Children's home inspection – Full

Inspection date	15/11/2016
Unique reference number	SC394224
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Angela Laurie
Inspector	Janine Shortman-Thomas

Inspection date	15/11/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC394224

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people report that they are happy and feel safe within the home. One young person confirmed this by writing: 'I enjoy living here. I would like to live here until I am ready for independence.'
- A particular strength of the home is the stability of the staff team. This encourages young people to build and develop positive, nurturing and trusting relationships with staff whom they value and respect.
- Professionals confirm that young people make good progress against their individual starting points. One professional said: 'The staff are proactive in their support of young people. [Name of young person] is taking part in a lot of activities and is making progress academically and socially. They are progressing in line with their age and development.'
- Effective internal and external monitoring systems in the home ensure that the manager and the leadership team have a good understanding of the home's strengths and areas for continued development. These systems support the manager in driving improvements forward.
- The manager and the leadership team support the staff well. Staff confirm that they can access additional help and guidance when they need to and report that this helps to inform and develop their care practice.
- The areas for improvement identified within the inspection relate to young people's risk assessments and obtaining feedback from young people, their families, carers and professionals during the manager's monitoring of the home.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and '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>12. The protection of children standard</p> <p>(1) In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must ensure that children are protected from harm.</p> <p>(2) In particular, the standard requires the registered person to ensure:</p> <p>(b) that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. This is with particular regard to ensuring that there are clear written risk management plans in place identifying how the staff will support, manage, supervise and monitor young people when the staff consider them to be under the influence of substances.</p>	02/12/2016
The registered person must establish and maintain a system for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff when they complete their quality of care review. (Regulation 45 (5))	02/12/2016

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by the local authority. It is registered to care for up to four children and young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and / or who have a learning disability.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
01/12/2015	Full	Good
17/03/2015	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
24/09/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
<p>A particular strength of this home is the warm, nurturing and homely environment that staff provide to young people. Professionals confirm that young people maintain positive relationships with the consistent staff team, and this supports and enables them to make good progress in all areas of their lives. The continuity of relationships for young people enables them to feel very confident in the home and helps them to make good progress towards achieving their individual targets and goals. Consequently, young people flourish in a stable, nurturing and supportive environment.</p> <p>Staff have a thorough understanding of young people's individual needs, as placement plans are clear, detailed and subject to regular review. Monthly case management meetings, which are held within the home, ensure that young people's key workers are kept up to date with any upcoming events, and young people's emerging and developing needs. Information shared and recorded from these meetings is disseminated to the staff during regular team meetings. This practice ensures that young people receive a high level of consistent care from a staff team which is fully up to speed with their needs and care plans.</p> <p>Positive relationships exist between staff and young people, and this provides the foundation for open and honest discussion. Mutual respect between young people and the staff was observed throughout the inspection, and young people appeared relaxed and happy in their home. Staff advocate well for young people to ensure that their rights and views are listened to and promoted. Regular consultation through key-working sessions, residents' meetings and informal discussions ensures that young people's views are routinely gained and acted upon. Young people are confident that the staff listen to their thoughts and ideas and feel valued and involved within their care planning. Young people know how to make a complaint and have used this to settle their dissatisfaction. This practice supports young people to feel valued and empowered to have control of their lives.</p> <p>Young people are supported well by staff to engage in a meaningful education provision targeted to meet their individual needs. Two young people maintain an excellent attendance record and make progress comparable with their peers. Staff value and support young people's education advancement and assist them with homework, learning opportunities and gaining part-time employment outside of school. When young people are reluctant to engage in the further education opportunities, the staff maintain their commitment and offer support, encouragement, advice and additional opportunities quickly to try to re-engage them in positive education and training activities. Despite the best efforts of the</p>	

staff, one young person has yet to fully commit to the opportunities that they are presented with, which limits their later life employment chances.

Practical arrangements are in place to meet young people's known and developing physical health needs. Young people are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians and are supported and encouraged to attend their routine health appointments. The staff maintain good links with professionals from specialist health services. For example, these include the looked after children's nurse, external therapists and professionals linked to substance misuse teams. This cohesive multi-agency working ensures that young people are provided with additional openings to engage with health services to support them with their individual and identified needs. Despite these links and the best efforts of the staff, one young person has refused to engage with the support which is offered. Subsequently, this young person continues to compromise their health and well-being as they continue to engage in risk-taking behaviours.

Staff value the importance of contact for young people in understanding their identity and heritage and ensure that young people maintain regular contact with family and friends. Young people's contact with their families and friends is supported and managed well by staff. Staff follow the individual contact plans which have been devised in consultation with the local authority. Staff are aware of the emotional impact that contact can have upon young people and sensitively support them at these times. This support from staff ensures that young people's contact with those who are important to them is managed in a safe, enjoyable and positive way.

Young people are helped and supported well by the staff to learn and develop their life skills. Staff are clear about young people's care plans and provide ample opportunities for young people to develop their life skills in a safe and managed way. Staff support young people to increase their skills in cooking, cleaning and budgeting, and support young people to work through the independent living skills booklets to further develop in these areas. As a result, young people increase their understanding and abilities to complete a number of tasks independently. Therefore, young people are equipped with the knowledge and skills that they require to support them with a successful transition into adulthood.

Young people live in a comfortable and homely environment that blends into the community. The home has undertaken some decoration and is clean, tidy and furnished to a good standard. Young people report that they are happy with their own bedrooms and confirm that they have personalised these to express their individuality and to reflect their own specific tastes.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Young people are safeguarded effectively and have a strong sense of feeling safe. Staff clearly understand their roles and responsibilities, and are knowledgeable about their safeguarding duties as they receive suitable training. Professionals confirm that they are confident that young people are kept safe as a result of the actions that staff take. They report that this is because staff know young people well. Professionals say that staff follow the agreed risk assessments and make suitable efforts to educate and support young people to make better and safer choices. Consequently, young people's health and well-being is promoted. Some young people's missing incidents have reduced and one young person's self-harming behaviours have become less frequent.</p> <p>Staff role model positive behaviour and interactions, and they provide clear direction and support to maintain positive peer relationships. The staff's detailed understanding of the group dynamics, their fair treatment of young people and prompt sound advice ensure that there are no incidents of bullying.</p> <p>Constructive and warm relationships exist between young people and staff, and consistent boundaries provide the basis for managing behaviour successfully. Young people are clear about the rules and the expectations placed upon them, and confirmed during the inspection that they feel that these household rules are fair. Staff focus on promoting positive behaviour and use individual incentivised plans to support them in this. When young people's behaviour falls below the expectations, sanctions are used appropriately to support young people to consider their behaviours and accept responsibility for their actions. When young people are unable to manage their emotional responses successfully, staff use diversionary techniques effectively. They de-escalate situations with young people well, which limits the need for staff to physically intervene. The one restraint that has been used since the last inspection was implemented by trained staff. The manager maintains effective oversight of these care practices to ensure that they are fair and appropriate, and challenges the staff sufficiently when sanctions have been implemented inappropriately.</p> <p>Professionals confirm that staff regularly monitor and review any incidents of young people going missing from the home, in partnership with relevant safeguarding agencies. A professional reported that they are confident that the manager and staff follow the individual trigger plans for young people and that sufficient action is taken by the staff to protect young people during these times. The staff demonstrate their knowledge of the push and pull factors for each young person, and the plans in place to limit the opportunities for these behaviours to occur. Young people are supported and given the opportunity to consider the impact and</p>	

consequences of their risk-taking behaviours. Staff try to help young people to understand the risks that they are placing themselves at, so that young people can make more informed and safer decisions. Staff undertake direct work using their own internet research, and gain support and guidance from outside agencies in their efforts to educate young people of the risks and dangers associated with going missing from the home and engaging in substance use. Despite prompt referrals to specialist drug and alcohol teams, and ongoing efforts to engage young people in meaningful discussions around these topics, some young people continue to engage in these behaviours.

The staff are clear about the young people's level of risk and vulnerabilities and can verbalise the actions that they take in supporting young people during these times. That said, the present written risk management plans in regard to supporting young people who misuse substances do not clearly identify when and what actions the staff will take. For example, this includes identifying when staff will undertake room searches and how frequently young people will be monitored and checked when young people return to the home under the influence of substances.

Staff respect young people's privacy, and the size of the home allows young people to enjoy time together or alone. A variety of health and safety checks ensure that young people and staff's safety and welfare is promoted.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>The home is managed by a registered manager who has been registered with Ofsted since September 2015. The manager has the appropriate qualifications and experience and demonstrates her commitment to further her own professional development by undertaking an additional qualification in leadership and management. The manager is supported sufficiently with the management tasks by two qualified and experienced assistant managers. These leaders share the manager's motivation, desire and commitment to provide a positive and safe environment for young people to grow and develop safely.</p> <p>Suitable action has been taken to address the one requirement and one recommendation raised at the last inspection. Subsequently, young people's health and well-being is promoted. This is because staff are aware of the updated policies and procedures linked to e-safety and self-harm and implement the individual risk management and placement plans to ensure that young people's individual health needs are met accordingly.</p> <p>The statement of purpose sets out the aims and objectives of the home. The</p>	

manager ensures that the commitments identified within this are consistently delivered by herself and the staff team to ensure that young people's needs and welfare remain at the heart of the home. The children's guide has recently been updated by the staff and young people. This provides a good, informative overview of what young people can expect to receive when they join the home. These documents ensure that young people, their families and placing authorities are clear about the level of services and support that young people will receive, and support them in holding the registered provider to account if these expectations are not maintained.

Young people are looked after well by a stable staff team which is trained, supported and experienced to deliver a good standard of care. Staff training is closely monitored by the leadership team to ensure that all staff are up to date with their mandatory training. This is complemented by opportunities to complete needs-led training, such as domestic abuse, ligature training, and raising aspirations for children and young people. There are a suitable number of knowledgeable staff to ensure that each young person's needs are met. A large proportion of the staff team have acquired the required level 3 childcare qualification, with sufficient arrangements in place for the three remaining staff to achieve this within the required timeframe. The manager and staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisals, which they confirm support them to reflect and develop their care practice.

The manager deals with complaints made against the home promptly and sufficiently. When young people or other agencies have raised any areas of concern, the manager has investigated these complaints thoroughly and promptly and ensured that a suitable solution is identified quickly. All significant events relating to the welfare and protection of young people living at the home are notified to the appropriate authorities in a timely manner.

Young people's records and case files are detailed and thorough. They are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that they provide a comprehensive picture of young people's needs, progression and future objectives.

The manager regularly reviews and monitors the progress that she and the staff are making towards meeting the aims and actions set within the home's development plan. As such, the manager has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for continued development of the home. Furthermore, the manager utilises a number of internal and external systems frequently to regularly monitor and review the quality of care provided for young people. An independent person undertakes the external monthly monitoring visits and provides written feedback to the registered manager. Sufficient internal monitoring processes are in place. The internal systems ensure that the manager is kept up to date with the progress and achievements of the young people. The manager has missed an opportunity to seek the views of the young people, their parents, carers, and the professionals involved in their care, within these systems. Consequently, the

manager is unable to fully evaluate what is working well, and what can be done differently to make things better for young people, within her quality of care review.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or that result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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