

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	25/09/2015
Unique reference number	SC042147
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Child First Limited
Registered person address	c/o, 40 Oxford Road, WORTHING, West Sussex, BN11 1UT

Responsible individual	Terry Goble
Registered manager	Sandra Whyte
Inspector	Jennie Christopher

Inspection date	22/09/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Inadequate
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

SC042147

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people say they feel safe in the home and know that staff care about all aspects of their lives. They identify staff to go to if they are worried or upset and say they trust them.
- Young people make progress as a result of placements within the home. In-house care plans highlight their successes, including increased personal hygiene, reduction in missing from care and fewer violent incidents. Successes are celebrated and young people are proud of what they achieve.
- Pre-placement impact assessments are a particular strength of the home. Assessments are robust and include the appropriateness of the environment, the potential new resident's needs and the impact all young people may have on each other.
- Young people attend college or training and are making a positive difference in the community. In particular, two young people arranged a charity coffee morning at the organisations' school, with minimal staff influence.
- Staff training in attachment disorders has increased their understanding of behaviours and what young people may be conveying. Staff are increasingly looking beyond the behaviour or incident and considering what is causing the distress for the young person.
- The home is now well maintained and decorated. Maintenance personnel have a greater presence in the home and identify areas for repair or pre-emptive measures required. Young people are proud of their home and see it as a nice place to live in. Areas for development within the home include: following up recommendations made by the manager in her monthly reviews; ensuring all plans identify who is responsible for actions; and that all records provide a clear account of what has taken place, particularly when staff have looked for individuals who are missing.

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 the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>5. Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met</p> <p>In order to meet the engaging with the wider system standard the registered person must:</p> <p>(c) challenge the placing authority to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans.</p> <p>This is with specific regard to accessing relevant placement plans, consents and agreements.</p>	<p>30 October 2015</p>

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Ensure all records are clear and detail all relevant information. This is with specific regards to who is to undertake tasks as highlighted in health care plans and; ensuring all actions are recorded in chronologies when young people are missing from care. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 62 paragraph 14.3)
- Ensure that when the Registered Manager highlights areas for improvement that these are acted upon. This is with specific regard to noting areas for further discussion in key work sessions. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 64 paragraph 15.2)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and run by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to 6 young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The organisation owns another children's home and special school in the local area.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/05/2015	CH - Full	Inadequate
27/01/2015	CH - Interim	declined in effectiveness
12/08/2014	CH - Full	Good
17/12/2013	CH - Interim	Satisfactory Progress

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
<p>Young people have very strong relationships with staff. They approach staff with any ideas or concerns they have and responses indicate staff are genuinely considerate of young people's views and requests. Young people's views are sought through various means, including meetings and key work sessions. Topics covered are individual to their developmental needs or interests and include, exploring activities, friendships, personal safety and group living. Young people have been involved in the refurbishment of the home and have a sense of pride and ownership of the environment. One young person enthused about how good the home was still looking since the monitoring visit. Young people also recognise where damage had been caused, taking responsibility for the breakages caused when angry or upset.</p> <p>Young people are supported to share their views on their futures. A young person is being supported by an advocate and the placing authority are valuing his views and ideas as part of forming his plan. Young people are able to complain when</p>	

they need to and are actively encouraged to exercise their rights, including calling the police after an assault despite being scared of the perpetrator.

When moving into the home, young people's needs are thoroughly assessed to ensure the home can support them. Newly implemented pre-placement risk assessments provide an in-depth assessment of the needs of all young people in the home and how they may impact on each other. Processes and arrangements are in place to ensure any negative influences can be managed by staff.

Young people make progress while living in the home. A parent commented on how well her son is managing in the home and that staff 'have helped him loads'. She feels staff keep her informed of her sons progress and all staff are approachable. In-house plans are clear and highlight how to support young people to progress and meet their individual needs. They are detailed and recognise individual's culture and identity and how they view themselves. Contact with significant family and friends is facilitated by the home and staff spend time with young people to ensure they are comfortable with arrangements and post meetings. Progress and success is celebrated and plans review month on month the progress young people have made. These includes personal hygiene; reduction in being missing from care and attending and sharing their views in statutory reviews.

Young people attend education or training as programmed. The day is arranged in order to promote education and learning. Those who are out of education are supported by in-house tutors and staff liaise closely with virtual headteachers to ensure positive outcomes. An example includes gaining a college placement for a young person when the college were not initially working with the home to secure this. Young people are keen to tell staff about their time at college and staff listen intently and continue to encourage individuals to attend and succeed. Young people spend most of their free time with friends in the community. They also engage in a range of activities, including bike building and restoration and recording and producing music. Two young people had arranged a charity coffee morning at the organisations school during the inspection, and were right to be proud of how successful it was.

Young people have the opportunity to learn skills for adulthood in line with their life-stage and emotional preparedness. Currently, an individual is budgeting, buying the ingredients and cooking two meals per week, which will increase as he becomes more confident. Other skills are learned on an ad hoc basis, including staff explaining how to cook specific items enjoyed by the young person.

Young people are supported to understand healthy lifestyles and what this means

for them. Comprehensive health plans address individual concerns and highlight who is best placed to meet that need for example, in emotional well-being, sexual health and smoking cessation. The document is confusing in some areas as it is not always clear if referrals have been made. When appropriate, young people access specialist emotional well-being professionals. Currently referrals have been made to a nationally regarded hospital to ensure an individual has the treatment he requires.

Young people are treated with dignity and respect in the home and the environment is recognised as their space. Behaviour is managed sensitively and staff have a greater understanding of the causes of behaviour. Staff have an increased awareness of individual's needs and the reasons behind behaviours they may display. Many have attended training in attachment disorders and recognise the link between an incident and what the individual may be conveying. Where behaviour continues to cause concern or there are significant changes, professionals meetings are arranged, to which the home provide reports and representation.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
<p>Young people say they feel safe in the home and identify staff they would go to if they are worried or upset. Staff have a key understanding of individual vulnerabilities. Observations showed a young person becoming anxious over a tribunal to determine his next placement and staff containing and supporting him through his anxiety.</p> <p>All staff, including administration and maintenance personnel have benefited from training in safeguarding and child protection. Staff are confident in processes to follow should they be concerned for an individual's safety or well-being. Safeguarding concerns are reported as appropriate to the local authority, social workers and officer charged with safeguarding. The recently updated policy reflects exploitation in all forms, and is being updated to include gangs and radicalisation.</p> <p>Exploitation in all forms is regularly discussed in key work sessions and young people's meetings. While young people say they understand this, there remain occasions where they have placed themselves at risk in the community. In</p>	

response, work on stranger danger has been completed and the concept of risk remains on the agenda.

Bullying is managed robustly within the home and all incidents challenged. Young people learn the difference between having fun and bullying. Police have been involved where bullying has led to physical assault. Young people at risk of radicalisation are being supported in the home. Impact risk assessments indicate signs for staff that others may become radicalised. Close liaison with the police has helped formulate risk assessments and specialist training is due in October.

Missing from care has ceased for those who have been in placement in the home for a longer period. A young person recently admitted with a history of prolonged periods of missing from care is being thoughtfully supported. The home liaises closely with social workers, family and specialist police officers to locate the young person when he is missing. Managers regularly check known locations of friends and acquaintances. While it is known this is taking place, it is not always recorded in the missing from care log. The young person's social worker commented that the 'home could nothing more' in order to locate the individual.

Risk assessments, including these prior to placement, are thorough and cross-referenced with relevant plans. They provide clear guidance on how to meet individual needs, while allowing young people to engage in appropriate activities and learning experiences. Young people are safe from avoidable risk in the home through regular checks and monitoring of safety equipment. Young people have engaged in a night time fire evacuation and understand what to do in the event of an emergency. The building is now maintained to a good standard and the organisation's maintenance team undertake routine checks to ensure it remains in good order. Recruitment practice is robust and all staff undergo a range of pre-employment checks.

The location assessment has been reviewed in conjunction with the local police. It reflects the needs of the young people currently living in the home and recognises some undesirable residents and locations nearby. To keep young people safe, staff focus key worker sessions on exploitation and abusive relationships.

Staff have a much better understanding of behaviour and the causes of unwanted behaviours. Recent training in attachment disorders has helped staff to understand and process individual's actions and recognise the need the behaviour is meeting. While this is a work in progress, staff are using their skills in the newly implemented life space interview record. This includes the young person's perception of an incident and staff's perception, and focusses on a way forward. There is an increase in restorative approaches to incidents, including a young

person producing an anti-violence poster in response to him hurting a member of staff. Police are called when it is deemed necessary, and reliance on the police to manage incidents has dramatically reduced. Where behaviour continues to escalate, joint meetings are held to determine changes in approach or to seek extra help, such as specialist emotional well-being input. Young people have been referred to a youth service anger support course, and are awaiting places.

Young people have appropriate access to the internet and are supported to understand how to keep themselves safe on line. Specialist programmes alert the director to any inappropriate material being searched, so this can be explored with young people. Key work sessions and in-house meetings consider risks on line and mobile phone. Searches of young people’s bedrooms take place as necessary, and at the request of police. These are recorded appropriately.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
<p>The home is effectively run by a Registered Manager who has been in post since March 2015. She is currently undertaking the level 5 qualification in management of children’s homes. She has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the home. She has worked hard to ensure the home has improved since being judged as inadequate in all areas in May 2015.</p> <p>The statement of purpose is regularly reviewed and is currently in the process of review again. This is to ensure it reflects the service provided and that staff have the skills it claims they have. The young person’s guide is clear and provides individuals with the information they need on making a complaint, who they contact both internally and externally. This information is also available to them within the home.</p> <p>External monitoring in line with Regulation 44 provides a sound level of challenge and scrutiny. There have been some delays in these reports reaching the home, and the managing director has robustly challenged the independent visitor regarding this issue. The Registered Manager’s monthly monitoring highlights areas for improvement and the progress of young people. Individual plans include progress made against agreed targets and are updated monthly so all can see their success. Other key records are regularly reviewed with the manager highlighting</p>	

where she feels extra support or discussion on a topic is required. While this is evident in documents, such as key work sessions and house meetings, her comments are not always followed up by staff. The home's development plan is clear and time limited. It had been focusing on how to improve the home as a result of the last inspection, and now reflects how improvements can be built upon and continue. The extensive list of requirements set at the last inspection had mostly been met by the monitoring visit in July 2015 and have all now been fully implemented.

Young people are increasingly being held central to all practice within the home. Those who do not agree with their proposed future plans are supported to express their views and have advocates to ensure their voices are heard. Staff form effectively working relationships with external professionals to ensure young people's needs are met. Social workers comment they are kept informed of any incidents or concerns and receive regular written updates on young people's progress. The management team are seeking specialist well-being support for an individual and targeted police intervention for another. Some statutory placing documents and consent for the use of CCTV in the home are missing from one young person's records. The manager has requested these, but has not exhausted all ways in which to gain these from the relevant professionals. Managers ensure multi-disciplinary meetings take place if they are concerned for a young person's well-being or feel their placement may not be suitable. Meetings have included the safety of a young person who has been missing for a prolonged period and for an individual whose aggressive behaviour had increased.

Relationships with neighbours are improving. Previous concerns regarding anti-social behaviour and noise are currently not a concern. Joint working with local police support officers has prevented youths from the local community congregating at the front of the property, leading to an increased positive presence in the neighbourhood.

All staff benefit from regular, challenging supervision. Appraisals highlight areas for staff development and training. Recent training in child protection, exploitation and attachment disorders have demonstrably increased staff knowledge and skill base. This has led to a positive impact on young people in the home. There have recently been changes in the staff team and the group is working with increased consistency, helping young people to understand what is expected of them.

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 looked after children 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 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 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 the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*.

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