

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	08/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC456149
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Bright Futures Care Limited T/A Cornerstones
Registered provider address	Regency House, 45–51 Chorley New Road, Bolton, Lancashire BL1 4QR

Responsible individual	Paul O'Leary
Registered manager	Lee Richards
Inspector	Nicola Thomas

Inspection date	08/03/2017
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	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC456149

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Young people develop close and trusted bonds with staff, which are sustained through individually resourced, committed staffing teams.
- Young people make excellent progress in their communication skills and comprehension, and this has a positive impact on their emotional health and well-being.
- Highly effective care planning processes are in place, which ensure that young people reach their full potential across all aspects of their development.
- Staff successfully and consistently implement complex, research-based strategies to enable young people to regulate their emotions and adopt more positive behaviour patterns.
- Young people who have significant disabilities are closely supported to access a wide variety of community resources and activities to broaden their experiences.
- Staff take the rights and entitlements of young people very seriously and are very strong and effective advocates for them.
- Leaders are competent and enthusiastic and have genuine aspiration for the young people in their care.
- Staff are well trained, highly skilled and very well supported to deliver a high quality of care to young people.
- Staff are highly proactive in helping young people to maintain and, in some cases, to rebuild relationships with families and people of significant importance.
- Leaders and staff work collaboratively with placing authorities, partners and families, all of which report that they are highly satisfied with the service that young people receive at this home.
- There are some identified shortfalls, which have not yet impacted on the quality of care that young people receive, and the manager is committed to addressing them.

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) meet(s) 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 Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applies to the home-</p> <p>(b) The registered person must ensure that the requirements of the order are complied with in respect of the home. This specifically relates to the risk assessment for storage of combustible materials in the boiler area. (Regulation 25(2) (b))</p>	31/03/2017
<p>The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children. This must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45)</p>	30/05/2017

Recommendations

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

- Records of restraint must be kept and should enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge. The review should provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure that it meets the needs of each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, learning disabilities and sensory impairments.

The home is part of a private organisation that also offers specialist education provision and care and accommodation for adults who have learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/11/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
17/12/2015	Full	Outstanding
18/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>Outstanding</p>
<p>The home is a very stable environment and, apart from one young person who moved in from another of the organisation’s homes, there have been no new admissions since the last inspection. Two of the young people who live at the home are preparing for transition into adult residential care. This organisation creates suitable provision for young people to move onto, and their individual staffing team moves with them. The experience of young people is placed firmly at the heart of the process. One young person has grown up with staff at the home for 12 years. All young people are placed at the home on a long-term basis.</p> <p>Young people benefit from individual staffing teams, which promote stability, and this has resulted in very close and trusted bonds with staff. Staff have a very in-depth understanding of the needs of young people in their care. They are nurturing and show considerable emotional warmth towards young people. One parent described staff as ‘excellent’ and ‘extremely child focused’. A social worker said that staff have ‘expert knowledge on the specific needs of the child placed and a clear commitment to extending knowledge’. A young person said, ‘The staff are ace.’</p> <p>Young people at the home have a comprehensive multi-professional assessment of their needs in order to increase their skills and abilities across all aspects of their development. This innovative and research-based approach underpins the care planning process. Staff are heavily engaged in this throughout, as it informs their day-to-day practice. Young people and staff are provided with strategies to increase their expressive and communicative skills. For example, one young person uses technology to verbalise and has advanced from one-word answers or instructions to full sentences. He is now able to express humour and other emotions, and consequently staff at the home report that he is experiencing a decreasing level of frustration and calmer behaviour as a result.</p> <p>Young people are consistently consulted on their day-to-day care arrangements. Some young people use pictorial methods of communication to make choices. One young person contributes to a local advocacy group. Another young person, who is unable to express his views verbally, accesses a formal advocacy service to ensure that his rights and entitlements are independently represented. Children’s guides are impressively personalised and highly reflective of individual communicative preferences.</p> <p>All young people are attending school and making good progress in their educational attainment. One young person has increased his ability to tolerate a classroom environment. The staff work hard to ensure that he receives regular breaks and is supported to attend for short periods of time. Another young person</p>	

has made considerable progress in his literacy skills. The school works very closely with the home to ensure a smooth transition each day. They use a communication book and have a member of staff who helps to settle young people back into the home at the end of the day.

Young people enjoy good health and each has their own individual healthcare passport. This contains information about young people's needs and communicative preferences 'at a glance', to ensure that healthcare professionals are fully informed and that young people gain the best possible outcomes from formal appointments. Staff promote active lifestyles and a healthy diet. One young person has visibly lost a considerable amount of weight since living at the home as a result of increased exercise, which has also enhanced his emotional well-being by reducing his anxiety levels.

The practice of multi-disciplinary assessment produces personalised strategies to help young people to regulate their emotional health. These are closely followed in practice and include individual sensory stimuli, such as weighted jackets or the use of beanbags to act as a calming measure and to increase their feelings of security. One independent reviewing officer spoke highly of this practice and stated, 'Staff have worked consistently with the recommendations of the occupational therapist, i.e. sensory diet, deep pressure massage which [have] been effective in improving the young person's posture, calming him and improving his interaction with peers and staff.' Staff at the home ensure that all emotional and mental health needs are met. Some young people have accessed play therapy, and one young person is currently accessing child and adolescent mental health services.

Staff at the home ensure that the care that young people receive meets any cultural and religious needs. One young person listens to prayer recordings daily, and another has an individual skin and haircare routine. Any dietary requirements are accommodated fully. A parent said, 'My son chooses to recognise god, and this is encouraged.' Another parent stated that their son is encouraged to 'keep in touch with his background'.

Staff promote skills for independence through an individualised, structured programme of goals. Staff persistently encourage young people to reach their full potential and recognise the importance of assisting them to learn how to cook, complete basic chores, shop, carry out self-care and access community resources. This is to ensure that they have the greatest opportunity to live as independently as possible in adulthood. Young people are also provided with sensitive information and guidance about relationships and sexual development in line with their cognitive abilities and levels of understanding.

Staff ensure that young people access activities and youth groups in the local area to aid their social development and to increase their tolerance levels of different environments. This prevents social isolation, increases young people's participation in society and provides them with a sense of belonging in the community. Disability is not a barrier to accessing opportunities and broadening the experiences of young people at this home. All activities are carefully risk assessed and staffed

accordingly.

Some young people are living a significant distance away from their families. Staff go above and beyond expectations to ensure that young people maintain a relationship with their families. They travel considerable distances to family homes and provide support to parents when necessary. Families are made welcome at the home, and staff communicate regularly with parents. One parent said, 'I am listened to and staff communicate regularly about his needs and care.' A social worker said, 'An extremely high standard of care is afforded to the young person who has benefited enormously.' One family member said, 'The home is the best thing that ever happened to my grandson.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Young people have comprehensive risk management and rigorous behaviour management plans. Staff use agreed behaviour management methodologies to assert boundaries. They are conversant with the triggers for negative behaviour and very skilled in recognising when young people need calming activity or stimulation in order to prevent negative behaviour.</p> <p>On occasions, young people are subject to physical intervention in order to prevent harm to themselves or others. Staff are trained to de-escalate situations whenever possible and use the least restrictive means to ensure that young people and others are safeguarded. Young people feel safe at the home, and their families and social workers agree that safety is always a priority.</p> <p>Staff ensure that every physical intervention is recorded, and the manager de-briefs each incident in a timely manner. Young people are consulted afterwards, and when young people cannot verbally express themselves they are observed for changes in behaviour or signs of distress. On occasions, the records of restraint could be more detailed and demonstrate exactly how staff have attempted to de-escalate the situation. They could also be clearer and record events in chronological order. This would assist the manager in identifying effective practice and evaluating and reviewing issues or trends of concern. A recommendation is made on this matter.</p> <p>A recent audit of fire prevention arrangements that was privately commissioned by the home stated that the boiler room should be kept free of any combustible material. While the manager had made efforts to remove such items, on the day of the inspection, they had been returned. A requirement is made to address this shortfall in regulation.</p>	

Staff working at the home are trained effectively and understand the procedures to report any safeguarding concerns.

	Judgement grade
<p>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</p>	<p>Good</p>
<p>The home is led by a competent and enthusiastic manager who has the required level 5 qualifications in managing residential care settings. He has 12 years of experience working within the organisation and was successful in becoming the manager of the home in September 2015. He leads a large staff team of 20, many of whom have completed the level 3 children and young people’s workforce diploma or equivalent. Six of the team members are still working towards this qualification.</p> <p>Staff benefit from regular supervision and have accessed effective training that is tailored to the needs of the young people in their care. Staff feel that the home is well managed. Their continuous professional development is encouraged and facilitated, in order to meet the diverse needs of the young people at the home and to ensure that succession plans are in place for when people move into positions of increased responsibility.</p> <p>Leaders are extremely child focused and have a detailed understanding of care planning processes for each child. Transitions are meticulously planned due to the complex needs of young people that live at the home. There is clear evidence of constructive challenge from leaders, when placing authorities have been reluctant to make significant decisions that impact on future care arrangements for young people. Leaders advocate strongly for decisions to be taken that are firmly in the best interests of young people. They proactively request that local authorities seek authorisation from the court of protection, when necessary, when young people lack capacity to make their own choices. Placing authorities and other partners speak highly of the leadership at the home and the quality of care provided. One independent reviewing officer described the team as ‘receptive, open, professional and committed to providing a high standard of care to the young person and meeting his needs’.</p> <p>A requirement made at the previous inspection has been met. The service meets the aims and objectives outlined in the statement of purpose. The manager actively monitors the quality of the service provided to young people and produces a bi-annual report. However, the report does not sufficiently demonstrate that the opinions of children, parents, placing authorities and staff are considered in this</p>	

review. A requirement is made to address this matter.

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 whom 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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