

SC405448

Registered provider: Quality Protects Children Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The children's home provides care and support for up to five children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is following the Structured Psychotherapy for Adolescents Responding to Chronic Stress (SPARCS) therapeutic programme.

The registered manager has been in post since 20 February 2017. She holds a level 4 qualification and is completing a level 5 qualification in management.

Inspection dates: 26 to 27 September 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 May 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/05/2017	Full	Good
20/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
26/07/2016	Full	Good
03/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Recommendations

- Ensure that the processes the registered person puts in place to enable them to monitor the matters set out in regulation 45 allow for a report to be generated at least once every six months. The generated report should be sent into Ofsted and the placing authority of all children in the home who are looked after. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.3)
- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

In particular, ensure that all cigarettes are disposed of in a suitable receptacle and that any cigarettes on the floor are removed.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

All young people receive exceptional levels of care and support and they relish the opportunities to spend time with the staff. As a result, young people are becoming increasingly confident young women.

One young person said: 'The home is perfect, as are the staff.' Another young person said: 'This is the best home I've ever lived in because the staff just get me. They are always there for me and don't give up.' The level of care and support provided has greatly enhanced young people's confidence and self-esteem and has resulted in a significant reduction in self-injurious behaviour.

The considerable improvement in young people's confidence and self-esteem is recognised by social workers, with one stating: '[name of young person] has made huge progress. I really wish [name of young person] had been here a lot sooner. The impact staff have had upon her in 12 months is remarkable and I can't thank them enough.' Another social worker said that he is disappointed that their young person is not able to stay until they are 18 years of age. They believe their young person has made considerable progress, especially with regards to her emotional health and well-being and there has been a dramatic reduction in her high-risk behaviours such as going missing from care and potential misuse of alcohol and drugs. The social worker commended the staff for their hard work and commitment to the young person.

Young people's emotional health and well-being are exceptionally well supported. The introduction of the home's chosen model of therapeutic care has been central to determining the level and types of support offered to young people. A young person said: 'If you let it [the therapy], it will change you.' This is now a familiar phrase used by staff and young people that reflects the engagement of young people in the therapeutic process and which is embedded in the culture at the home.

Young people are much more engaged since they first arrived at the home in thinking about past traumatic experiences and events and the effect that these have had upon them. Young people use reflective journals to record their thoughts and feelings, which helps to inform the next steps for their therapeutic care plans. A young person said that, by putting everything on paper, this has allowed her to make sense of the world around her, and she now feels that she has much more control over her life and the choices that she makes.

Young people are much less anxious and are now more able to deal with challenging or difficult emotions, such as having suicidal thoughts. This has resulted in a dramatic decline in the number of hospital admissions. Highly effective multi-agency working means that successful strategies are implemented to help young people to make informed choices. For one young person, this has meant that they are now able to wait for an appointment during surgery hours rather than requesting emergency treatment at the hospital or an out of hours appointment. This is a massive achievement and one that she was previously unable to consider.

Care planning is highly individualised and reflects the uniqueness of each young person. Staff's instinctive understanding of each young person allows them to read the subtle changes in behaviour that indicate that a young person is struggling. As a result, the staff act swiftly to support the young people.

Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) workers are very complimentary about the home's staff and the support provided to young people. They said that the staff team works collaboratively with them and that the staff have fought to ensure that young people's voices are heard. For example, advocating for a young person to return to their care following a hospital admission. This proved to be a turning point for the young person. While the risks concerning self-harm and of suicidal thoughts remain high, the severity and number of incidents are greatly reduced. A CAMHS worker said: 'The main change for [name of young person] is that they now see a future and are setting life goals.'

Young people are treated with the utmost dignity and respect. Importantly, young people also show exceptional empathy and support to others who are in distress. The staff are highly attuned to the cultural diversity, gender and sexuality of the young people. Staff provide excellent support so that young people are free to

explore their faiths and to make decisions about this. For example, the staff sensitively supported a young person with her desire to be christened.

Young people are making great progress with their education. Two young people recently sat their GCSE examinations and exceeded their expected outcomes. One young person has a clear career path in forensic science. This has been extremely well supported by staff and the school. The young person researched college courses and completed the application forms with minimal assistance from staff. However, staff worked hard behind the scenes to ensure that this was a viable goal for the young person and that she was able to impress potential placements.

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

Child protection and safeguarding are central to the staff's day-to-day practice. Strong safeguarding practice means that nothing is missed, and safeguarding is everyone's priority. This was shown by the swift action taken by the maintenance person to alert the registered manager to drawings found on the wall in a young person's bedroom. This allowed the registered manager to talk to the young person and establish that the drawings were an expression of her faith. This then resulted in a constructive and supportive approach that allowed her to feel confident in understanding and practicing her faith.

Risk reduction is exemplary. For example, episodes of young people being missing from care have significantly declined because of the staff's actions. Staff follow carefully thought out and highly individualised procedures. Young people recognise the lengths that staff go to, to keep them safe.

A significant reduction in the use of physical interventions typifies the young people's ability to manage their anxieties in more positive ways and to self-regulate their emotions. Young people said that the introduction of sensory boxes has helped them greatly and has provided them with the tools to manage difficult and challenging situations. For example, applying essential oils to clothing to offer a comforting and reassuring smell to help them overcome feelings of anxiety. Sanctions are no longer used. Staff now engage young people in reflective sessions that allow young people to think about their behaviour and the impact of this on themselves and others. This has been a highly successful strategy because there has been a significant reduction in negative behaviours, such as abusive language.

The home is a warm, homely environment. Young people are proud of their home and have been involved in choosing the new decor and furniture. Each young person's bedroom is designed to reflect their individuality. Some young people continue to smoke cigarettes, despite the staff's concerted efforts to help them to stop. There are numerous cigarette ends on the rear patio and to the front of the home. This is detracting from the homely environment that staff are striving to maintain. Swift action was taken during the inspection to address this.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

An inspirational and committed registered manager leads the home. She holds a level 4 management qualification and is in the process of completing the level 5 qualification. The management and the staff team members' confidence has grown immensely in the last year. They are now flourishing. Consequently, they are much more confident about the therapeutic programme and its implementation. This shines through in their conversations with young people. As a result, young people are now making exceptional progress in relation to their starting points.

The manager has created the right environment for staff to provide young people with an excellent standard of care and consistency. Staff are very knowledgeable, experienced, highly skilled and motivated. They are tenacious, resilient and do not give up trying to make a positive difference to young people's lives.

The manager provides each member of staff with excellent support, guidance and encouragement. Staff have regular opportunities through practice-related supervision and team meetings to reflect on young people's progress, their own performance and to share and develop their skills and knowledge.

The manager supports and encourages staff to develop expertise through good-quality training relevant to the needs of the young people. Staff make the most of their training opportunities and use their learning to improve the effectiveness of how they support young people.

From the review of the internal and external monitoring and quality assurance processes, it is evident that the monitoring of the home is now extremely robust and is used highly effectively to inform practice and the home's development plans. The external scrutiny by an independent person and comprehensive internal reviews of the quality of care help the manager to continue to make improvements that benefit young people. The independent person wrote: 'Each of the young people are making good progress in individual areas of their development while at [name of the home] whether this is in their education, mental health or in their life skills. This, I feel, can be attributed to the excellent therapeutic input in the home and the "never give up" ethos of the staff with the young people.'

A minor weakness is that the registered manager had not sent her last monitoring report to Ofsted. This was an oversight and has not affected the overall judgement of the home. There was a recent monitoring report on file at the home that upon review showed a thorough evaluation of the service's strengths and areas for development. Development plans are detailed, organic documents that are continually evolving to meet the diverse and complex needs of the young people living in the home.

Records are very detailed and clearly reflect the progress that the young people are making. Careful, considerate recording is enhancing young people's understanding of their past, present and future goals. Young people are actively involved in creating and reviewing their plans, which gives them a strong sense of belonging and of inclusivity.

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: SC405448

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Quality Protects Children Limited

Registered provider address: Quality Protects Children Limited, Hill House, Archway Road, Huyton, Liverpool L36 9XB

Responsible individual: Anthony Nolan

Registered manager: Maria Boden

Inspector

Chris Scully: social care inspector

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