

SC444869

Registered provider: Hopedale Children and Family Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care for up to 15 young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home has its own school, which is registered with the Department for Education. The school is on-site and all of the young people attend the school.

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 September 2017

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

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

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 young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 25 January 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- Highly vulnerable young people form exceptionally warm and trusting relationships with dedicated staff.
- Young people quickly achieve a feeling of stability after they move in. This helps them to make significant and sustained progress in their education, independence and emotional well-being.
- Child-focused staff provide young people with strong and consistent structures and boundaries.
- Young people enjoy living in one of three small groups where highly trained staff identify and meet their individual needs.
- Young people personalise their bedrooms and enjoy a comfortable, well-maintained environment where they feel at home.
- Enthusiastic staff encourage young people to develop interests in a wide range of stimulating and fun activities. This supports young people's social, physical and emotional development and increases their self-esteem.
- Each year, staff take a number of the young people abroad for a fun holiday.
- Vigilant and highly trained staff ensure that young people are safe. Staff work with young people to help them to understand how to keep themselves safe.
- The dedicated registered manager and deputy manager are exceptionally motivated and lead by example. They are child focused and have high aspirations for young people and the service.
- Staff receive regular training and supervision to support their practice and ensure that they are able to meet the needs of each young person.
- Staff practice is strongly underpinned by cognitive behavioural psychological therapy theory. Their work is enhanced by close collaboration with the in-house therapist.
- Staff work very effectively with a wide range of professionals and family members. Staff advocate strongly on behalf of young people if they consider that their needs are not being met.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Medical records do not always indicate the reasons why young people are not given their medication.
- The registered manager does not always ensure that, following a sanction, staff and young people are spoken to and that young people's views are recorded.
- Records are not always clearly dated.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/06/2016	Full	Outstanding
31/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
10/12/2015	Full	Outstanding

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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
The registered person must ensure that a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23(2)(c))	03/11/2017
The registered person must ensure that within 48 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person") has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35(a)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	03/11/2017

Recommendations

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's home's regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4) In particular, staff should date and sign children's updated risk assessments and behaviour management plans.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Highly vulnerable young people, who have previously struggled to form attachments, quickly form trusting and warm relationships with excellent staff. Young people explain that they love having cuddles with affectionate and sensitive staff. Young people also enjoy going for 'coffee chats' with their favourite staff, when they can relax and express their views, wishes and feelings. This high level of individual attention and strong emotional support enables young people to begin to 'open up' to adults, often for the first time. Young people feel that staff listen to them and help them.

Young people benefit significantly from access to the in-house therapist and complementary therapies, such as hand massages, during the day. This helps them relax

and manage their own emotions and behaviour. Staff make sure that young people have access to independent advocacy services. Staff make sure that young people are prepared before they meet their advocate and that they understand what the advocate can do for them.

Young people enjoy living in one of three small groups, depending on their age and developmental needs. Each group has its own area in the home with personalised bedrooms and a sitting room. Young people have contributed enthusiastically to the age-appropriate furnishings and decoration. The youngest group's sitting room is full of colourful toys and pictures, while the oldest group has a room that is attractive for teenagers and supports their growing independence. This small group living provides young people with the levels of emotional and physical support that they need to make significant and sustained progress. Young people and staff eat and talk all together in the 'bistro' dining room, exchanging jokes and enjoying varied and healthy meals.

When they arrive, young people receive a colourful and age-appropriate children's guide, which explains all aspects of living in the home. The guide explains the rules and boundaries which staff reinforce through consistent practice. These boundaries provide young people with a strong sense of security and stability. Young people know how to complain. They attend and enthusiastically engage in weekly young people's meetings, where they express their opinions and contribute positively to plans for the home. Staff keep young people informed of developments, such as staff changes, and young people are involved in staff recruitment. This high level of engagement enables young people to feel a strong sense of ownership of their home.

Young people have great fun with each other and staff, who identify and support the young people's individual interests and celebrate their achievements. Young people choose to engage in a wide range of stimulating activities including swimming, conker picking, bike riding and football. They attend local groups such as theatre school and scouts and they make friends in the local area. Each year, some of the young people go abroad on holiday with staff. There is a lot of excitement and anticipation as young people prepare for the trip.

Young people arrive at the home with highly complex emotional and behavioural needs. They make sustained and significant progress beyond expectations and develop emotionally, socially and educationally because of the excellent support that they receive from staff. They attend and engage well in their education. Young people's independence and self-esteem increases and they are able to speak more confidently to staff and visitors. Staff ensure that young people's physical and mental health needs are identified and met. Consequently, young people learn to understand and recognise their emotions and take increasing responsibility for managing their behaviour.

Feedback from parents and professionals is extremely positive. One parent said, 'He has settled really well, it's amazing. His mental health and safety are prioritised. He is scared of men, but the men here are excellent role models.' Another parent said of her son, 'His attitude to women has improved. He shows more respect and understanding. He is now being a big brother to his sister, which he wasn't before. He is better at managing his emotions and his temper.' The social worker for one young person commented, 'He is doing fantastically. They keep him safe and support his independence.'

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

Highly trained and vigilant staff keep young people safe. Young people, parents and professionals confirm this. Staff are very skilled at de-escalating situations and are confident when they need to use physical interventions, which are only used as a last resort. Young people who have experienced restraints say that they felt safe and that they understood that restraint was necessary to keep them safe. High staffing levels ensure that young people receive the monitoring and support that they need. Young people do not go missing from the home.

Staff involve young people in writing detailed and effective risk assessments and behaviour support plans. Young people are encouraged to think about risks and identify effective strategies to reduce them. This helps young people to manage their own behaviour and become safer. Staff constantly support young people to develop an awareness of positive behaviours. Incidents of bullying are managed well.

The home has developed a 'cuddle programme' based on an understanding of young people's needs for safe physical comfort. When young people are worried or distressed, and at increased risk of engaging in behaviours that could harm themselves or others, staff offer them a 'programme of cuddles'. If a young person wants this support, they can choose to receive a cuddle half hourly, for example, without having to ask. Staff are aware of young people's wishes and respond accordingly. Young people choose if and when to have this support and benefit from the comfort and security that it provides.

Staff are safely recruited and staff training is up to date. Staff have the knowledge and skills needed to identify and respond effectively to issues including self-harm, radicalisation, going missing, female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation and substance misuse. Staff work closely with other professionals to ensure that important information is shared and that appropriate action is taken to reduce risks and keep young people safe.

There are some areas for improvement. These relate to record-keeping. Staff review and update risk assessments, referring to the incidents that have led to the reviews. However, staff do not always date and sign these updates. Dates are missing from some physical intervention records. Records of sanctions are not always dated, nor do they always indicate that young people or staff have been spoken to. When young people refuse to take their medication, medical records do not always show this. These shortfalls have had little impact on young people because staff demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of young people's needs, routines and moods. Staff are engaged in constant dialogue with their colleagues and the young people. Staff share this information and knowledge at detailed handover meetings. Although these shortfalls are primarily recording issues, there is the potential for important information to be missed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager holds a level 5 qualification in leadership and management, and has many years of experience working with children and young people in residential care.

The exceptionally dynamic registered manager and deputy manager are highly motivated and share a very clear vision for the home and the young people. They make sure that young people feel that this is their home. For example, the registered manager recently held a meeting for the staff and the young people to explain why one of the managers had left.

The registered manager is strongly child focused and creatively involves young people in the life of the home. For example, she arranged for young people to meet prospective employees and contribute to the recruitment process. Over the past year, young people have benefited hugely from a highly successful change to their living arrangements, whereby they were divided into three groups based on their age and support needs. This was as a result of the registered manager's reflections about how to better support young people. This change gives young people a sense of progression towards independence. The registered manager skilfully managed this change and young people quickly began to benefit.

The registered manager is constantly looking for ways to improve the service for young people and is now focused on embedding a new management structure that she has designed. This will provide each of the three groups with a specific manager who can focus on and monitor young people's needs, providing additional management oversight.

The registered manager has a thorough understanding of the strengths of the staff team and its areas for development. Staff supervision is reflective and regular and staff benefit considerably from the opportunity to access group therapy twice a week. This supports staff's emotional well-being and develops their resilience. Annual appraisals include self-assessments and all staff hold additional responsibilities that enhance their practice and personal development. The registered manager makes training interesting and stimulating, attending seminars that are relevant to the work of the home and sharing new ideas and information with staff. The young people are also booked to present training to the staff team on their experiences of being in care. Staff feel well supported and say that they thoroughly enjoy working at the home.

The registered manager is strongly committed to continuously developing her own knowledge and practice. She places great importance on staff practice having a sound theoretical base. This supports staff to fully understand the experiences of young people and provide them with appropriate care. Staff are trained in a cognitive behavioural psychological therapy approach and use this alongside a high level of nurturing. The innovative registered manager is always pushing boundaries and has worked with the head of the school to develop the 'cuddle programme'. This is based on attachment theory and is a most effective method of comforting and reassuring young people.

Staff work collaboratively with other professionals to ensure that young people receive the services that they need. This includes working with the in-house therapist and child and adolescent mental health services, who support many of the young people. Staff also work very effectively with education and social care professionals, independent advocates and the police.

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: SC444869

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hopedale Children and Family Services Limited

Responsible individual: Amy Hopkin

Registered manager: Sarah Deaville

Inspectors

Louise Whittle, social care inspector

Andrew Hewston, social care inspector

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