

SC455864

Registered provider: Holme Farm Residential Village Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home may provide care and accommodation for up to eight children and young people with emotional and or behavioural difficulties and mental disorders, excluding learning disabilities. The home is owned and operated by an independent provider.

Inspection dates: 25 to 26 April 2017

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

good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 8 June 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: Requires improvement

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because

- Staff's good safeguarding practice means that young people are safe and protected.
- Staff enjoy spending time with young people, and trusting relationships are developed. Young people are able to discuss sensitive issues with staff.
- The majority of young people are engaging in education and benefit from good attendance.
- Young people respond positively to the boundaries and routines at the home. This results in fewer aggressive outbursts and very few restraints.
- Staff's restorative work with young people encourages positive behaviour and peer relationships at the home.
- There is a strong management team at the home, with an eclectic mix of skills.
- Recruitment practice is robust and thorough.
- Young people live in a homely environment, receiving care from a nurturing staff team.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/06/2016	Full	Requires improvement
13/04/2016	Full	Inadequate
09/12/2015	Full	Good
14/08/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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 keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and if a home has a website, the registered person must ensure that a copy of the statement of purpose is published on that website unless the registered person considers that such publication would prejudice the welfare of children in the home. (Regulation 16(3)(a) & 16(4))	01/06/2017

Recommendations

- The registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1) Specifically, to look at the areas in close proximity to the children's home and the risks that these present to young people, to make the existing locality risk assessment more localised.
- Appropriate forms of contact should be promoted and facilitated for each child, including where appropriate visits to the child in the home; visits by the child to relatives and/or friends; letters, emails and texts; use of social media and other forms of contact via the internet. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.18) Specifically, to make sure staff are available to collect young people from contact with family at the agreed time, so young people's contact is not cut unnecessarily short.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Newly admitted young people receive extensive information about the home upon their arrival. They are linked with a key-working team, and the thorough introduction to the home helps young people to settle quickly. Staff enjoy spending time with young people, care about them, and have extensive knowledge about the young people and their needs. Consequently, young people feel cared for and talk with affection about the staff. One young person who lives at a distance from her hometown stated, 'If I could pick up (name of home) and all the staff and put them where I am from, it would be perfect.'

Three of the four young people are engaging with education, either attending school or training schemes. One young person has 100% attendance. The on-site school offers additional educational support to young people. One young person is not accessing education. However, staff persevere and work closely with the virtual school and education worker to encourage engagement with education.

Staff work cohesively as a staff team and deliver a consistent package of care for young people. Their restorative work with young people includes encouraging positive behaviour and peer relationships at the home. Staff do not tolerate bullying yet, on the occasions that it does happen, young people discuss this in their residents meeting. This helps to maintain positive peer relationships at the home, and young people show empathy because of the work undertaken with staff.

Young people live in a homely environment, receiving care from the nurturing staff team. Staff bake with the young people and make sure that they have healthy, home-cooked food. A staff member said, 'I wouldn't mind cooking something different if they are feeling down, to cheer them up, especially if they are missing home.'

Young people personalise their own bedrooms and contribute to the running of the home. They express their views through informal chats, key-working sessions and the weekly community meeting. They are listened to and their opinions are valued. The manager takes prompt action following their requests. For example, young people were provided with their own towels for hygiene reasons.

The provider uses the services of an in-house therapeutic lead to work with young people and to provide advice to staff. Staff also work alongside other clinical professionals, which has resulted in significant progress in young people's emotional well-being. An independent reviewing officer said, 'They are committed to (name of young person) and constantly try different strategies if things don't work, and they make a real effort to help her to engage.'

Staff are proactive and work with young people and their families to progress contact. This has resulted in young people having increased overnight contact with family members, due to these relationships built with staff. Failure to have sufficient staff who can drive has resulted in contact being cut short by several hours, for one young person.

This causes frustration and anxiety for young people. The recent employment of staff with driving licences will mitigate against this happening in future.

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

Staff's good safeguarding practice means that young people are safe and protected. It begins with a robust impact risk assessment and thorough matching process. The manager obtains full information about new young people to ensure that staff are able to meet their needs and keep them safe. This also means limited disruption to the current residents.

Young people respond positively to the boundaries and routines at the home. Open and honest discussions regularly take place. This is because of young people's trusting relationships with staff, who work restoratively with them. Young people reflect on their negative incidents and take control of managing their behaviour, with fewer aggressive outbursts.

When necessary, staff are effective in de-escalating negative behaviours. They receive physical intervention training from the deputy manager. Ongoing support and guidance allow staff to reflect on incidents. Feedback from young people provides useful information on behaviour management. The staff team uses this to look at new strategies to manage young people's aggression. As a result, there has been a significant reduction in the number of restraints used by staff.

Risk management is good at the home, and young people feel that staff keep them safe. Staff know young people's vulnerabilities and the dangers that they face. Comprehensive, robust and individualised risk assessments inform staff how to provide support and protection. Key-working sessions educate young people to keep themselves safe. The management team monitors and reviews plans using an effective visual tracking system, enabling staff to easily identify trends or patterns in risk-taking behaviour both for individual young people and for the group as a whole. Targeted key working then takes place on areas of concern to educate young people on how to keep themselves safe.

Missing from home episodes have been significantly reduced. This reduces the risk of sexual exploitation. When speaking about one young person, a social worker said, 'The staff team has such a good understanding of her needs. They know how to respond to her. I would not want her to move from there. She is not running away, she is no longer violent and she accepts boundaries.'

The location risk assessment does not reflect concerns in the immediate vicinity of the home. Although staff are aware of this information, formalising it in a document will ensure that all staff and young people are aware of the risks in the area.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager was registered to run the home in November 2016. Prior to this, he worked as the deputy manager, so has a good understanding and commitment to the young people at the home. He has the relevant qualification, skills and experience to

manage the home. Support is available from three deputy managers who make a strong management team with an eclectic mix of skills.

New systems and processes make recording easier for staff. This gives staff more time to spend with young people and reduces the chance of staff making errors through the duplication of records.

Staff recruitment practice is robust and thorough. Competent and experienced staff are employed, due to the rigorous interview process. One new member of staff said, 'It was a tough interview, but it made me realise that they were committed to employing good staff.'

A restructure of staff has led to the development of a new team comprising new and existing staff. There is a strong focus on continuing professional development, with an investment in training for staff and managers. This ensures that staff have up-to-date knowledge and skills to meet the needs of the young people. The in-house therapist provides a comprehensive mental health training package. Staff receive training in areas such as attachment and trauma. The training relates to young people living at the home. This offers a better learning experience for staff, who can reflect on the way that they respond to young people.

The management team regularly holds supervisions and team meetings with staff that contain a reflective element about young people. External professionals attend team meetings, providing staff with direct learning experiences and enhancing their development. This keeps them up to date with changes that affect young people, and staff use this knowledge when working with young people to educate them.

Staff work effectively with a number of professionals to provide multi-agency working for young people. Agencies involved with the young people speak highly of the staff team and management of the home.

The manager has met the requirements from the last inspection. One requirement raised at this inspection is in respect of the statement of purpose. This lacks clarity in relation to the therapeutic work and support provided to young people. This is also missing from the company's website, but it does not affect outcomes for young people.

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 difference 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: SC455864

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Holme Farm Residential Village Limited

Registered provider address: 1 Fox Street, Sunderland Road, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE10 0BD

Responsible individual: Julie Cowen

Registered manager: Michael Cowans

Inspector

Tina Ruffles, social care inspector

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