

SC479596

Registered provider: Tree House Care Fostering Solutions Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately run children's home. It provides care and accommodation for up to seven young people who have learning disabilities.

Inspection dates: 7 to 8 August 2017

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: 27 March 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

- The young people's growth in self-esteem and confidence empowers them to make significant progress in all aspects of their lives.
- The young people receive excellent support, enabling them to be involved in inclusive activities in the community, which enrich their lives.
- The young people's sense of safety and security allows them to build trusting and meaningful attachments with the staff.
- Excellent safeguarding procedures ensure that the young people are protected.
- An inspirational manager leads a well-trained and motivated staff team.
- Exceptional collaborative working with partner agencies ensures that the young people receive consistent care.

The children's home's areas for development

- Recording following physical interventions needs to consistently demonstrate that the young people have been able to express their views.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
17/01/2017	Full	Outstanding
02/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
14/09/2015	Full	Outstanding

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

Recommendations

- Any child who has been restrained should be given the opportunity to express their feelings about their experience of the restraint as soon as is practicable. Children should be offered the opportunity to access an advocacy support to help them with this. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.60)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The young people thrive in their spacious and comfortable home where they feel safe. Their bedrooms are decorated to their taste. This allows the young people to make choices about their surroundings and demonstrate their individuality. The young people's enhanced sense of self and well-being empowers them to form meaningful attachments with the staff team. A young person said, 'This is my home and I don't want to go out of it overnight, not even on holiday. Once you are happy in a home, you don't leave it.'

The resilient and patient staff team members are excellent role models for the young people. They follow the exceptionally well-written care plans carefully. This ensures that the young people receive consistent care, allowing them to make outstanding progress in all areas of their lives. This is particularly evident in the development of their social skills. The young people have real friendships with each other, which boosts their self-esteem and feelings of being valued. A staff member said, '[Name] has her friends, her riding, her fundraising for the children's hospice, and this helps make her whole.'

The young people enjoy excellent relationships with the manager, the staff team and each other. They know and trust that the staff will take care of them and meet their needs, which allows them to enjoy their lives. Family members and professionals are welcome to visit the home at any time, which enhances the young people's sense of belonging. A staff member said, 'We give children the time of their lives and a future.'

The young people's emotional and physical health improves as a result of the consistent adherence to care planning. Young people's access to services and quality of care is promoted as a result of the excellent relationships that the staff team have with medical professionals. The comprehensive training that staff have received in epilepsy care ensures that young people's seizures are managed swiftly. This reduces their severity, allowing the young people to recover more quickly. Outstanding partnership working with the local child and adolescent mental health services [CAMHS] ensures that the young people's diverse vulnerabilities are addressed. The young people grow in self-belief, as they feel understood. An independent reviewing officer [IRO] said, 'The manager and her

team have been fabulous. They have taken consultation from CAMHS and been patient with him. [Name] has made exceptional progress and I'm really, really pleased.'

The young people are thriving in their appropriate education provisions. The close collaborative relationships that the staff have with teachers ensure that the young people receive consistent messages, allowing them to learn more. The resultant growth in confidence allows the young people to engage in inclusive activities in the community, for example horse riding and membership of the St. John's Ambulance cadets. A head teacher stated, 'A student that attends from my school has had his life chances improved significantly since living at [home's name].'

The young people each have different communication skills. The proactive manager and the staff team understand these and ensure that their views are captured. Information is available to the young people in their preferred method, whether that be in the written word, through speech or in symbolic form. Consequently, the young people are empowered to express their views and feel listened to and valued. A young person said, 'The staff understand me and so I really feel I'm being allowed to grow up in my way.'

The young people enjoy fulfilling lives. Those that are able are actively involved in inclusive weekly pastimes in the community, where they have the opportunity to build lasting friendships. All of the young people participate in outings and holidays, which give them new life experiences. The young people also enjoy hosting themed 'coffee mornings' to raise money for a local children's hospice. They are actively involved in making the cakes and hosting the event and they are very proud of their fundraising achievements. The young people's lives are enriched because of these experiences. An IRO said, 'They have all these baking days and doing things for charity, which the children love. They [the staff team] have helped them be part of the community.'

Exceptional planning and preparation with young people ensure that they are ready for their transition to adult placements or semi-independent living. The young people learn the importance of appropriate places for private time, which broadens their future placement opportunities. The most able young people learn how to manage their personal hygiene and household tasks and administer their own medication as a result of the step-by-step guides that they follow. This excellent detail enables the young people to absorb the skills while bolstering their self-esteem and confidence. A head teacher said, 'The focus on life skills and independence has been particularly beneficial for a student who attends our school.'

The majority of the young people's families live in close proximity to the home and so are able to maintain regular and positive contact. This is not the case for all, however, and the proactive staff team is working to ensure that contact can take place through social media and with the services of an interpreter. This empowers the young people to retain vital cultural and community links. A teacher stated, 'Staff have an excellent rapport with the young people they support and go extra miles to ensure family contact is maintained and promoted.'

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

An excellent range of comprehensive risk assessments details every aspect of the young people's lives. They are reviewed and updated by the manager, which ensures that progress is recognised and the young people's day-to-day vulnerabilities are planned for. The young people are protected by these measures. A social worker said, 'He's a complex young man, and for him to settle as well as he has is really good. He's just so at home there. They manage him so well.'

The nature of some young people's learning disabilities means that they can become fixated on certain ways of behaving, which could be construed as bullying, for example showing an interest in wrestling. The staff team works proactively with those individuals and their families, to enable them to recognise that this is not appropriate. The constant interaction that the staff have with the young people prevents bullying behaviours, and the young people report how safe and secure they feel. A social worker said, '[Name] has absolutely loved his time there, and his behaviours have come on so much. He's a totally different lad to when he was at [previous home's name].'

Sufficiently high staffing levels and appropriate restrictions, given the individual needs of the young people, mean that they are rarely absent from the home. There have not been any missing episodes since the last inspection. The manager has prepared an excellent information booklet, in pictorial form, which informs the young people about what would happen if they were to be missing or if they became lost during an activity. This exceptional practice not only reassures and protects the young people but also could be shared with other similar establishments.

The excellent examples set by the calm and consistent staff team empower the young people to learn positive ways of behaving. The young people respond well to the home's reward system and so the need for sanctions is rare. Sanctions that are imposed are of a restorative nature, empowering the young people to learn the consequences of their actions. The young people are happy and enjoy the boundaries as a result. A young person said, 'I think I'm much better at not losing my temper. I would do things when I got stressed [at school], but I don't do it as much now it's the holidays, because I can laugh all day with my staff.'

The nature of some young people's disabilities and their impulsiveness can lead to sudden and unprovoked attacks on the staff. During those occasions, the trained staff intervene physically to sensitively calm the situation. Although there have been some injuries to staff members, the young people are not criminalised and staff prioritise their safety. The manager's monitoring of all restraints ensures that they are appropriate and that the staff team has the opportunity to learn from the experience. However, not all recordings following a restraint clearly demonstrate whether the young person has been formally debriefed after an incident. Consequently, not all young people may be helped to fully understand why their behaviour is unacceptable.

Excellent safeguarding arrangements are linked with locally agreed protocols and meet all statutory and government requirements. As a result, the young people are protected from becoming involved in child sexual exploitation, radicalisation or extremism by the well-trained manager and staff team.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The inspirational manager is well qualified and experienced to fulfil her role. She is aspirational for the young people to achieve the best possible outcomes, whatever their ability, which allows them to thrive. Her consistent leadership over the past 10 years has ensured that a motivated and well-trained staff team meets the young people's needs. A local authority commissioning panel wrote, 'We were impressed to hear of the dedication, determination and resilience of the staff team.'

The excellent relationships the manager builds with partner agencies ensures that the young people receive holistic care. One placing authority took a considerable amount of time to agree a suitable adult placement for a young person to move to, although the manager had worked hard to identify a safe and suitable provision for him. The manager appropriately made formal complaints regarding this delay, which demonstrated a capacity for improvement as it met the one recommendation raised at the last inspection. The manager's persistence has resulted in a local authority taking responsibility for the young person, as it should. A social worker said, 'The manager is amazing. I totally trust her perspective. She always goes above and beyond. I just can't praise her enough.'

The young people achieve exceptional outcomes as a result of the manager's attention to detail and motivation of the staff team. She fully understands each of the young people in her care, what their presenting needs are and how to achieve the highest outcomes in their best interests. The manager's passionate and consistent leadership inspires staff and the young people to want to be the best they can. The young people's happiness and achievements demonstrate the success of this approach. A young person said, 'The staff are always there and I know who the staff are and that they are always the same. It's not like the place I was in before because there were always agency people on and I never knew who was coming in the door. Here I know I can trust people.'

The longevity of the staff team is a major factor in the outstanding outcomes for the young people. Staff members reported how well supported they feel. Regular supervision sessions and annual appraisal ensure that they remain skilled to fulfil their roles. The staff team is knowledgeable, enthusiastic and nurturing. Staff are all qualified to a minimum of an NVQ level 3 and all regularly undertake specialist training to meet young people's individual needs. A social worker said, 'Staff are great. It's just an amazing place, and the majority of the staff have been there for years, and their experience and the way they understand the boys shines through.'

Comprehensive reports prepared by the home's external visitor contribute towards young people's safety and well-being. The manager's excellent internal monitoring processes ensure that all achievements are celebrated and any areas for development addressed.

The manager's reports incorporate the views of young people, staff and all other interested parties, which ensures that they have the opportunity to influence care in the home.

A comprehensive and detailed statement of purpose provides an excellent picture of the care provided. This includes details of young people's achievements and, with her permission, an extract from a young person's diary detailing her day-to-day life. Young people's opportunities for success are enhanced as they are appropriately matched and placed. The manager said, 'It's the children's home, not a children's home.'

The manager actively promotes equality and diversity within the staff team. The resultant growth in understanding and tolerance ensures that the young people are all seen as unique individuals. This allows their diverse needs to be promoted and celebrated. A young person said, 'I can't think of anything that they could do better.'

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: SC479596

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Tree House Care Fostering Solutions Ltd

Registered provider address: Treehouse Care Fostering Solutions Ltd, 107
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Responsible individual: Hugh Mellett

Registered manager: Kim Treacher

Inspector

Ann-Marie Born, social care inspector

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