

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	22/09/2015
Unique reference number	SC020151
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Country Care Children's Homes Limited
Responsible individual	Rachel Dowle
Registered manager	Janine Morrell
Inspector	Rachel Griffiths

Inspection date	22/09/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved Effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC020151

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The home is providing good, and in some respects, an outstanding service to young people.
- Young people speak positively about their experiences of living in the home and they enjoy very positive and trusting relationships with caring and dedicated staff.
- Young people are provided with very good quality, individualised care, from an experienced and skilled staff team. They provide them with high levels of structure, routine and consistency alongside high levels of praise and encouragement.
- A multi-disciplinary approach to each young person's care is very effective. Working practices between care staff, staff from the on-site school and the therapy team are cohesive. This helps ensure that young people have bespoke care plans and packages of help and support that meet their individual needs.
- Staff implement comprehensive risk management plans which helps to ensure young people's safety.
- Staff are driven by an enthusiastic and aspirational management team. They feel valued and share the manager's vision to significantly improve the life chances of young people.
- Two shortfalls and one area for improvement are identified as a result of this inspection. These are in relation to supervision practices, a documentary shortfall and in respect of improving consultation feedback for young people. These are matters which are not currently having an impact on the safety and well-being of young people.

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 meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice related supervision by a person with appropriate experience (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	25/11/2015
The registered person must maintain records ('case records') for each child which include all information and documentation listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child, with particular reference to copies of any plan for the care of the child prepared by the child's placing authority and the result of any review of the placing authority's plan for the care of the child being on files. (Regulation 36 (1)(a))	25/11/2015

Recommendations

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

- Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon, with particular reference to children receiving feedback regarding their views and suggestions during house meetings. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 22, paragraph 4.11)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned. It provides care and accommodation for up to 8 young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/02/2015	Interim	Improved Effectiveness
05/08/2014	Full	Good
26/03/2014	Interim	Satisfactory Progress
10/07/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>good</p>
<p>Young people’s experiences and overall progress are very good. A social worker said: ‘It is impressive how this young person has come on in all aspects of her life. She is now having her health needs met, she is progressing emotionally, physically, educationally and socially. She now takes great pride in herself.’ A young person said: ‘This placement is just meant to be. It is giving me such an opportunity to make something of myself.’ Young people develop life and coping skills and they develop achievable aspirations and dreams for the future.</p> <p>Young people enjoy very positive and constructive relationships with staff. A young person said: ‘The staff really care and they have really helped me turn my life around. They provide structure, you know when things are happening, how the staff will respond to things and you know they are always there to help you.’ Observations of staff also demonstrate that they are extremely consistent, supportive and caring. A social worker commented: ‘It is a very supportive environment with extremely consistent and predictable care.’ The positive and trusting relationship young people have with staff, alongside the nurturing and consistent environment created by them, impacts positively on young people’s sense of stability and security.</p> <p>Young people who have previously struggled in education, or have been out of education for some time, make good, and in some cases excellent progress. Staff have high aspirations for young people and encourage them to reach their educational potential. A parent said: ‘My daughter is excelling educationally. The staff are very encouraging to help her achieve her goal of becoming a lawyer.’ A young person commented: ‘I now like school and realise how important it is so I can have the things I want in later life.’ They develop an enthusiasm for learning and start achieving. As a result of this, their opportunities and choices in adulthood are greatly enhanced.</p> <p>Young people’s emotional and behavioural development is enhanced while living in this home. Co-ordinated work undertaken with them by the staff and the home’s therapists help them to understand and start to come to terms with their traumatic histories and experiences. A social worker said: ‘The young person has gained incredible insight into herself. She has developed excellent relationships with staff and her therapist.’ The support provided impacts positively on young people’s emotional well-being and ability to understand and develop appropriate relationships with others.</p>	

Young people engage in a range of activities within the community which are tailored around their individual choices and preferences. Activities include drama groups, horse riding, kayaking, going to the gym, having beauty treatments and going to the cinema and shopping. Some young people have also progressed to doing work experience in the local community. Older young people have gained part time employment while completing college courses. A parent said: 'The staff have promoted my daughters interests and talents. She now does voluntary work with horses.' By engaging in their chosen activities, young people are assisted to make progress emotionally, physically and socially. They make friends, they have fun, they develop self-confidence and they make a positive contribution to their community.

Young people's relationships with their families develop and significantly improve. They develop a better understanding of their own difficulties and the dynamics within their own families. A young person said: 'With the help of staff my relationship with my family is really back on track. I really look forward to going to stay with them.' A parent said: 'My relationship with my daughter has improved 100%. We now have lovely quality time. I have got my daughter back.' Young people benefit greatly from improved relationships with their families in terms of their sense of identity. It also provides an opportunity for them to have an improved family support network in the longer term.

Young people are respected and valued in the home. They are encouraged to express their views at regular house meetings, in individual key working sessions and through weekly feedback questionnaires about the day-to-day running of the home. A young person said: 'I am more confident now. Before I was really shy and could not voice my opinions. Now I can project my thoughts and feelings and I feel that staff listen.' This helps raise young people's self-esteem. Practice could be improved further in this area by the results or outcomes of young people's suggestions, how and if they have been acted upon, being confirmed in house meeting minutes.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Young people say they feel safe and social workers and parents report that they	

are safer as a result of living in this home. A young person said: Here is a safe place to live. The area is isolated and so I am not tempted to get mixed up in trouble. Also, I have a really strong bond with my key worker and having someone I can talk to helps me feel safe.' An emotionally safe and secure environment provides young people with a strong sense of safety and well-being.

The homes anti-bullying policy is effectively implemented by staff. Work undertaken with young people in respect of all aspects of relationships helps them develop mutual respect and understanding for their fellow peers. A young person commented: 'I get on with the other young people. We are good friends. Staff do not put up with bullying behaviour. We all respect the fact that we have issues and respect that we are all different.' This provides young people with a higher level of safety in the home.

Staff implement, and regularly review, detailed risk management plans. This helps keep young people as safe as possible. Staff and therapists engage young people in programmes of work targeting specific areas of vulnerability and need. A social worker said: 'Staff have done lots of work regarding self-protection and self-respect. The young person has developed insight into risk. This makes her so much safer.' A young person said: 'I have done lots of key-work and I have learnt a lot. When there was a cyber-bullying issue staff helped me through it. They also helped me to understand the risks about drugs and about self-harm and I am now in a really good place.' Co-ordinated packages of help and protection are effective. A parent said; 'The whole package is wonderful – the care, the therapy and the education.' As a result, from young people's various starting points, there are reductions in risky behaviours, and in some instances, they stop altogether. For a minority of young people who continue to display some form of risky behaviour, such as self-harm, robust monitoring and regular multi-disciplinary reviews occur. This ensures that risk management plans remain effective and that young people are safeguarded and continue to receive the most appropriate support to meet their individual needs.

Despite some young people having a significant history of going missing prior to living in this home, instances of missing from care are infrequent. On the few occasions when young people have gone missing, staff have implemented the home's missing from care procedures and young people have been swiftly located and welcomed back into the home. Good programmes of work undertaken with young people in respect of the dangers of going missing from home are effective in further reducing risk to young people in this area.

Proactive behaviour management strategies and systems have had a positive impact on young people. Positive relationships, high levels of praise, consistent approaches and work undertaken with young people regarding their previous patterns of behaviour helps them to reflect and consider the impact for themselves and others as a result of those behaviours. This helps them develop insight, empathy and more socially acceptable behaviour. A parent said: 'Behaviourally I

have seen a massive turnaround. My daughter has developed understanding and is now able to manage her emotions.'

As a result of effective behaviour management strategies, incidents of physical intervention are low. There have only been nine instances since the last full inspection. On each of these occasions it was used as a last resort in order to safeguard young people. All incidents are recorded in detail. Young people are always offered life space interviews to reflect on incidents and staff are debriefed. The management team have a good overview of all measures of control used. This increases their capacity to improve practice further in this area.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
<p>The registered manager is very experienced and holds the management qualification required by the Children's Home Regulations 2015.</p> <p>The home is well managed by a committed, enthusiastic and child-centred management team. A social worker said: 'This is a belting placement.' A parent commented: 'I cannot fault the home and wish there were more like it.' Practice is informed by theories which underpin complex behaviours. It is developed and further enhanced by keeping abreast of research into matters which affect young people living in care and through good levels of consultation with staff, young people, the therapists and stakeholders.</p> <p>Staff undertake a programme of training which covers mandatory and specialist areas in relation to young people's emotional and behavioural difficulties. Staff also have access to the home's therapists on a weekly basis to discuss specific aspects of each young person's behaviour and to gain further insight and advice regarding their specific needs. As a consequence of good quality training and support provided to staff, young people benefit from care provided to them by skilled staff who are equipped to meet their complex individual needs.</p> <p>Staff feel well supported and valued by the management team. They report high satisfaction in their work. A member of staff said: 'I love working here, the managers are very hands on and supportive and I have never worked in a place where the staff work so well together.' Another said: 'I love it here, the staff are really positive and this positivity filters down to the young people.' As a result, a cohesive and motivated staff team ensure that young people's needs are met to a high standard.</p>	

Staff attend regular and productive team meetings and the majority of staff have regular supervision which ensures that their practice and development is monitored and supported. One member of staff however, has not had any formal supervision for six months. Although there is no evidence to suggest that this is having a negative impact on the care being provided to young people, it has the potential to do so. All staff require regular and effective supervision and support to be able to reflect on their practice and the needs of the young people they are caring for.

The homes statement of purpose is comprehensive and provides parents and placing authorities with clear and accurate information about how young people will be helped and supported while living in the home and the therapeutic approaches used. Young people are also provided with a comprehensive guide so that they know what to expect before they come to live in the home.

Young people's case files hold lots of information and evidence of some excellent work being undertaken. The homes placement plans are comprehensive and provide a coherent picture of the care being provided. However, some case files do not contain up to date local authority care plans, pathway plans or records of reviews of placements. Although the registered manager has chased outstanding documents, young people's case records are incomplete. Not having all relevant local authority plans and records prevents care and interventions from being informed by each young person's relevant local authority plan.

The home has good systems to monitor the progress young people make. Daily briefing between care and school staff, regular multidisciplinary progress reviews and data collected in respect of all significant incidents which arise in the home enable managers to analyse patterns and trends in behaviours. This ensures that care plans and risk management plans remain effective and that changes are instigated to improve the quality and effectiveness of these plans. The management team are thus able to demonstrate very clearly whether young people are meeting or exceeding their targets and what impact living in the home is having on their lives.

Quality assurance monitoring, both internally and externally, is effective in identifying strengths in the home as well as minor shortfalls. Both systems provide for regular consultation with young people, parents and professionals. This ensures that the quality of the service continues to be assessed and analysed in order to drive improvements. This and the home's development plan demonstrates that this is a service committed to continual improvement.

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 looked after children 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 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 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 who 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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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