

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC461938
Inspector	Elaine Allison
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Crystal Care Solutions Limited
Registered person address	Nelson House, Boat Horse Road Kidsgrove STOKE-ON-TRENT ST7 4JA
Responsible individual	James Maxwell O'Leary
Registered manager	POST VACANT
Date of last inspection	15/07/2014

Inspection date	11/11/2014
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Previous inspection	improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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The home is structured with clear and consistent boundaries in place. Young people are at the centre of the home's daily routines. The home is organised to ensure young people enjoy access to a full range of social opportunities and experiences. The home provides highly personalised care that takes account of individually assessed needs. Young people develop confidence and their individual personalities flourish.

Young people are safe and feel protected from significant harm. They have formed good relationships with staff and are extremely positive about their placements and the care they receive in the home.

Young people's care is well planned. Placement plans clearly outline young people's needs and the services required to meet these. Young people are supported by a highly committed and stable staff team who offer an excellent level of guidance, which supports young people to make positive and productive changes in their lives.

The home has developed strong effective relationships with partner agencies. This collaboration ensures that professionals are working together to safeguard young people living at the home. Communication is excellent and social workers and families are regularly kept up to date with young people's progress and achievements.

The home is well managed and the staff team is fully committed to the ethos and working practices in the home. The strengths and weaknesses of the home are recognised and suitable plans are put in place to ensure continued development and sustained improvement.

This inspection has not raised any major concerns, although two areas for future development have been identified. This links to staff training and ensuring staff have the knowledge to meet the individual needs of the young people and ensuring young people have ample storage for clothing. The home must also appoint a permanent manager who requires making application to be registered with Ofsted.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned by a private company. It provides care and accommodation for two children and young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/07/2014	Interim	improved effectiveness
02/12/2013	Full	good

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
7 (2001)	appoint an individual to manage the children's home if there is no registered manager in respect of the home. (Regulation 7 (1) (a))	12/12/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated; in particular provide sufficient wardrobe space or alternative furniture to store clothes (NMS10.3)
- ensure staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and purpose of the setting (NMS18.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

All of the young people are engaged in education or actively seeking employment and are making very good progress. Young people are fully involved in their education choices. They maintain good attendance at school and other educational settings and as a result their future life opportunities for continuing their education or securing employment are enhanced.

Young people with emerging and changing needs rely on their trusting relationships with staff to help them through periods of distress. Although some young people experience severe disruption to their emotional health, they appreciate the commitment of staff to provide consistent care and nurture. A parent commented 'I think she is a lot safer where she is now than she was before; I would say that she is thriving in there'.

Young people receive appropriate emergency treatment or assessment of need when necessary. This enables staff to amend their care plans and to identify appropriate levels of support. A young person said '(staff member) knows when my moods are low and it really helps me to cope'.

Young people understand the importance of healthy lifestyles, and according to their age and ability take responsibility for their own health. Some young people engage in sports activities such as football and ice skating, to help them stay fit. All young people are offered prompt access to professional consultation and guidance on a range of health and social issues including self-harm and promoting their emotional wellbeing. Young people attend routine health appointments, and with staff encouragement, reduce their involvement in behaviour that damages their health, such as self-harm. Some young people engage with mental health workers from CAMHS to help them come to terms with ongoing issues, past difficulties or trauma. This helps build their emotional resilience and self-esteem.

Young people, who had a history in previous placements of going missing from home, have not been missing since arriving at this home. Comprehensive risk assessments are in place to ensure that young people are safe whilst in the community. One young person commented 'I get free time but staff still check on me. I understand that they have to keep me safe'. This level of maturity evidences that young people have grown in their awareness and understanding of the risks involved should they become missing. They have also developed confidence in their ability to negotiate with staff about how to safely spend time in the community.

Young people's views and opinions are encouraged and respected in the home. There are regular young people's meetings and one to one sessions between the young people and their key workers. This encourages young people's involvement in the

home and also helps them to develop a sense of ownership and pride in it.

Young people develop independence skills in accordance with their age and ability. Consequently, young people develop skills in cooking, menu planning, shopping and in general household tasks, such as washing their clothes, and cleaning their rooms. A young person commented 'I am fully independent and I get my own shopping from my budget and I'm a mean cook'. Developing these life skills and experiences, not only prepares young people for independence, but also helps them to develop confidence and self-esteem.

Young people continue safe and positive contact with family members, when it is beneficial to do so. They share their feelings and experiences about family contact with staff, and this provides them with the support they need to experience successful relationships. When necessary, young people receive additional support from staff or other professionals, who sensitively oversee contact arrangements. This enables young people to maintain and enjoy important relationships in their lives.

Quality of care

good

Young people benefit from qualified, committed and enthusiastic staff, dedicated to understand their individual needs and wishes. Staff use informal meetings and activities with young people that encourages them to reflect on their feelings and behaviour. Staff ensure the voice of the child is accurately and clearly presented in regularly reviewed plans of care developed by the home. A parent said 'Staff are very good: I have contact almost daily'.

There are regular staff meetings. Staff consider these as important both in terms of allowing for better communication and for information sharing, ensuring continuity of care for the young people. Staff say there is a supportive culture which results in a high level of consistency in their delivery of care for young people.

The home's placement plans and care planning practices are detailed and are consistently followed in practice. This means that young people are receiving consistent care and support to promote their personal growth and their abilities, to fulfil their potential. Plans are well written and clearly outline the individual needs of young people. They incorporate strategies on how to meet these needs. As a result, staff adopt a consistent approach with young people, and this impacts positively on their welfare.

Medication, where used, is safely stored and carefully administered. Detailed records of medication are routinely checked for accuracy. This ensures that any errors are quickly identified and promptly resolved. Written records show health needs are being promoted and protected through access to the necessary medical and psychological advice, support and treatment they require. Staff respond appropriately to health issues or concerns and work cohesively with an external clinical psychiatrist

and CAMHS team to ensure that support is tailored to assessed needs. This combined approach helps young people progress. Detailed records of key working discussions are held securely in the home. This ensures that staff are able to work consistently and know of any matters affecting the progress that young people make.

Young people know how to complain and are confident that should they wish to complain this would be appropriately managed. Information is provided in the young people's guide and organisational complaints documents. Procedures for managing complaints ensure they are handled fairly and investigated thoroughly by the manager or external nominated person.

The home provides a safe and comfortable environment which is domestic in scale and appearance. The atmosphere is relaxed and calm and young people certainly feel at home. Young people have their own rooms that are personalised. Young people do not have sufficient furniture to store their clothing.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people are well protected by clear safeguarding procedures and care practice that gives their safety and well-being a high priority. Young people feel safe living at this home. All staff are clear about their safeguarding responsibilities. Staff manage the balance between protection and enabling young people to take age appropriate risks very well. This approach allows them to enjoy the same social experiences as their peers in the wider community.

Staff are very proactive in promoting positive behaviour and relationships. As a result, young people predominantly behave appropriately and interact positively with both each other and staff. Permissible forms of control, de-escalation techniques and discipline are clearly set out in organisational policies. Staff are clear that physical intervention is used only as a last resort. On the rare occasion when incidents do occur, they are safely managed. Records show young people reflect on significant incidents with staff and this allows them to consider what other options and strategies they may use to manage their emotions and to avoid future incidents.

Young people contribute to their own behaviour management plans and learn to take responsibility for their behaviour. This is highly effective in enabling young people to identify their own triggers and work out strategies to help them when they experience difficulties.

When serious incidents occur, the staff team ensure that prompt and appropriate action is taken to ensure the safety of young people. Furthermore, all required serious incident notifications are made to the appropriate services. As a result, young people's safety is promoted at all times.

Where sanctions are used, they are fair and proportionate. This ensures that young

people are encouraged to display and maintain socially acceptable behaviour. A young person said 'I think the sanctions and things in here are fair I have helped with some plastering after I caused damage to my room'.

Risk assessments outline what measures need to be in place to support the young people in their environment, in the community and in various activities. These ensure that the welfare and safety of the young people is not compromised and is maintained to a good standard. Regular fire drills take place in both day and evening times. This ensures that young people and staff are practised in safe evacuation. All areas of the home are safely maintained and appropriate checks ensure any defects are identified and resolved. This ensures that young people's health and safety is appropriately promoted in the home.

Managers maintain recruitment and selection procedures that help prevent unsuitable people from having access to young people. Managers carefully induct and support new staff into their role to ensure they acquire the skills necessary to care safely for young people.

Leadership and management

good

The home is operated in accordance with the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose and children's guide. There has been an interim manager in post since August 2014 and they hold an appropriate qualification. Although the home continues to be effectively managed there is a need to appoint a permanent manager who requires making application to register with Ofsted.

The Statement of Purpose has been updated to reflect staff changes. It provides an accurate and comprehensive picture of the home and of the services it provides. Staff morale is high. An experienced and effective management team ensures staff are well motivated and maintain their enthusiasm. Staff supervision and appraisal takes place regularly and staff say they feel well supported. A staff member commented 'supervision is very good and gives me time to discuss practice issues and any development that I might need'.

Staff practice is supported by comprehensive guidance, policies and procedures. The home's written records are completed and audited to a good standard, being stored with due regard for confidentiality. The well-structured files and placement plans give a very good oversight of each young person's progress and history of their time at the home.

Staff training lacks sufficient emphasis on the potential risks of self-harm and CSE. Some staff were able to demonstrate an adequate knowledge of these subjects. A staff member however, commented 'I think we need a more in-depth knowledge of self-harm and CSE'. This lack of comprehensive knowledge throughout the staff team may have an impact on the consistent care of the young people.

There are regular visits to monitor the conduct of the home under Regulation 33 of the Children's Homes Regulations, and the Registered Manager undertakes quality assurance monitoring checks in line with Regulation 34 on a regular basis. These visits and checks include consultation with parents and children, and observation of, young people. The manager examines trends and patterns during these processes and information is shared with the staff team. These reports are now submitted in a timely way. This allows Ofsted to consider the impact and robustness of the monitoring of the home and addresses the one recommendation from the last inspection.

The home has appropriate systems in place to notify Ofsted and other relevant bodies of significant events that occur within the home or with young people. This ensures that those with an interest in young people's welfare are kept appropriately informed. Records kept in the home are clear, accurate and up to date. No complaints have been received between inspections.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
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Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
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Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
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Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
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Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.
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Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.

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