

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC431228
<b>Inspector</b>	Michael Mulvaney
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Registered person</b>	Unique Care Homes Support Limited
<b>Registered person address</b>	Holland House 1-5 Oakfield Sale Cheshire M33 6TT
<b>Responsible individual</b>	Annily Jameson
<b>Registered manager</b>	POST VACANT
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	24/07/2013

<b>Inspection date</b>	09/12/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>good</b>
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	good

## Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	<b>good</b>
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Young people have made good progress while living in this home. In some cases this progress has been very good, particularly in relation to their behaviour. The home provides good quality care. Each young person has a clear and detailed care plan. Individual records and care plans are safely stored. The staff regularly review and amend them to reflect changing needs and circumstances.

Up-to-date risk assessments and well-considered safe working practices help to keep young people safe. Previous shortfalls in the handling and administration of medication have been rectified to promote safe caring practice and meet young people's health needs.

The Registered Manager understands the strengths of the home and is supporting the staff to build positive relationships with the young people in order to improve outcomes for them. The manager has produced a development plan designed to build on the home's strengths and address areas of acknowledged weakness. This includes developing a training pathway for all staff.

This inspection identified that staffing levels have fallen and that currently the rota only provides minimum staffing cover. The home also employs a number of routines to manage young people's behaviour which are restrictive and lack a clear rationale.

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private company. It is registered to accommodate up to six young people of the same gender with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/07/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
25/04/2013	Full	adequate
31/10/2012	Full	good
10/05/2012	Interim	good progress

### 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
33 (2001)	ensure that the independent person shall produce a written report about a visit (referred to in this regulation as "the independent person's report") and provide a copy of the report to HMCI. (Regulation 33 (9)(a)) *	16/01/2015

\*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice

### Recommendations

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

- ensure that physical restrictions on normal movement within or from the home are not used unless this is necessary to safeguard children and promote their welfare and development. (NMS 10.4)

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people develop independent living skills. These skills prepare them for adult life.

Young people develop social skills and grow in confidence through their involvement in local sports clubs and work experience. While living at this home the young people have formed positive attachments and friendships. This is in contrast to some of their previous experiences.

Some young people have established close trusting relationships with individual members of staff and this has enabled them to settle. Some young people, who previously needed to be physically restrained when they were living elsewhere, no longer need to be restrained. Social workers have commented on the good relationships young people have with the staff.

Some young people have good school or college attendance and attain well. However, not all young people are attending college or education and this may affect their future life opportunities.

Young people's health is good. They are encouraged to eat a healthy diet and participate in sporting activities. Some of the young people smoke and the home is seeking support to organise a smoking cessation programme.

Young people maintain contact with family, friends and other people who are important to them. This helps young people maintain significant relationships and learn to understand their past.

### Quality of care **good**

A committed team of staff provide clear and consistent boundaries. This helps the young people to understand the expectations that the home has in terms of their behaviour. However, young people's behaviour is not consistently managed in a positive and constructive way; some routines are restrictive and lack a clear rationale. For example, at night all of the downstairs rooms are locked, young people's night-time use of the internet is also restricted and if young people don't attend school the electricity in their rooms is turned off.

Young people form positive relationships with staff who have a good understanding of their needs. Staff make good use of these relationships to help young people develop confidence through one-to-one key work sessions.

All young people have clear care plans that are regularly reviewed and implemented. These plans include up-to-date and relevant information about young people's needs and cultural backgrounds. Case files include an independence record, an up-to-date risk assessment, a behaviour management plan and details of key work sessions.

Young people have access to local primary health care services, including doctors, dentists and opticians. The staff support them to access specialist health services as and when necessary to ensure that their health care needs are met. Young people's health is good; they are all encouraged to eat a well-balanced diet and enjoy a range of sporting activities. Young people have key work sessions on a regular basis. Key work sessions provide an opportunity to explore and discuss issues which are affecting them, such as relationships and contact with their families.

Young people are involved in decisions that affect the day-to-day running of the home. They have regular group meetings to discuss food, activities, their achievements and other issues. They are involved in the redecoration of communal areas. This helps the young people to regard the home as their own and see how their involvement can influence decisions in the home.

The home has good working relationships with other agencies, education facilities and the local community. Recent developments include working with a roller skating rink to organise volunteer placements for young people and getting young people involved in sporting activities both locally and further afield. This ensures that young people engage in positive activities in the community.

### **Keeping children and young people safe    adequate**

The young people say that they feel safe and that the staff work hard to promote their safety. The safeguarding policy has been updated to include issues such as child sexual exploitation and missing from care. This policy encourages open communication and effective recording. Staff understand the whistle blowing policy and how and when to escalate concerns to senior managers. This means that young people are looked after by adults who know how to recognise the signs and symptoms of significant harm and what to do if they occur.

The home has a clear missing from care policy and staff know how to respond if a child goes missing. Although such incidents are few and far between, there is evidence to show that when children do go missing appropriate action is taken.

All of the young people are able to identify a trusted adult they can talk to if they have any concerns. Regular key work sessions provide space and time for young people to discuss anything that is worrying them.

Physical intervention is not used as a punishment. It is only used when all attempts

by the staff to de-escalate a situation have failed. When physical intervention is used, incidents are well recorded and counter-signed in line with the home's policy.

Young people are registered with local health professionals. If young people require medical attention appropriate appointments are arranged. Doctors, dentists and opticians are seen regularly and follow-up appointments are kept. Young people are encouraged to be physically active, for example by playing table tennis or badminton, or going to the gym. All young people are encouraged to eat a healthy balanced diet. Young people have plenty of support from the home to be healthy.

Fire drills are carried out regularly and health and safety checks are routinely completed which means that the young people are cared for in an environment that is physically safe and secure.

Safe recruitment processes are now in place; background checks are routinely undertaken and information is cross-referenced in line with the regulations. The home has a process for checking the identity of visitors to the home to ensure that young people are not exposed to unsuitable adults.

## **Leadership and management**

**good**

The home has recently appointed a new manager who is appropriately qualified and experienced to manage a children's home and is currently going through the process to become the Registered Manager. The manager has an NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) level 4, is working towards a level 5 diploma and has been working with young people for over four years. The manager has been instrumental in maintaining the day-to-day running of the home through the recent changes in staffing and the challenges associated with that.

Concerns raised at the last inspection have been addressed. The manager now monitors the daily records and use of physical intervention to ensure that the welfare of the young people is not being compromised. The process for administering medication has been improved and now involves regular auditing by the senior member of staff on duty. This has helped to reduce the number of errors. As a result, young people's health needs are better managed.

Social workers say that they are kept well informed at all times. They receive a useful weekly report detailing the progress that the young people are making and any issues that may be affecting them or their care.

Young people are cared for by a small and committed group of staff who work a shift pattern that provides continuity for the young people. Consistency of care is further supported by the regular use of bank staff who know the young people and are familiar with their needs. A recruitment process is underway to improve the staffing situation.

The staff say that frequent supervision and regular staff meetings mean that they are well supported. Supervision and staff meetings provide an opportunity for the staff to discuss the care of each young person in detail and share information about how best to meet young people's individual needs. Staff take on additional responsibilities and talk with enthusiasm about their work. There is a very good system of internal and external monitoring in place. The external monitoring reports are completed, and are of good quality but are not always forwarded to Ofsted in a timely way. This limits the regulator's ability to monitor and provide effective external scrutiny.

Although significant events, such as complaints about members of staff, are very rare, there is evidence that when they do occur the relevant authorities are notified in a timely manner and appropriate action is taken by the home. Young people know how to raise a concern or make a complaint; they have not made any complaints since the last inspection.

Young people are looked after by staff who have received sufficient training to enable them to provide good quality, safe care. Ongoing training, which all staff are booked onto, ensures that their competence is maintained.



## What inspection judgements mean

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

## 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.