

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC047894
Inspector	Rosie Davie
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Care Focus Limited
Registered person address	Care Focus Ltd 18 Bury Street STOWMARKET Suffolk IP14 1HH
Responsible individual	Jean Lloyd
Registered manager	Paula Jane Warren
Date of last inspection	11/03/2014

Inspection date	10/12/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
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 staff provide one to one care which is personalised and tailored to meet the specific needs of each young person. Young people are proactively encouraged to engage in care and pathway planning. The service provides education within the home. Young people have direct access to psychological support for example, art therapy.

External agencies are confident that young people placed are: 'safe and getting access to the support they need.'

One parent described her child as: 'safe and settled.'

The Registered Manager is nurturing and committed. The staff team work hard to keep the young people safe and to achieve meaningful difference to their emotional well-being.

This inspection raises one regulation and two recommendations. The areas for improvement relate to the storing of medication, bullying and staff accessing information to provide a comprehensive service.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is one of a group, run by an independent provider. Staff offer care and support for up to four young women. Teachers provide education within the setting. Direct therapeutic support is available for each young person to access.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/03/2014	Interim	good progress
03/10/2013	Full	adequate
20/11/2012	Interim	good progress
27/06/2012	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
21 (2001)	make suitable arrangements for the recording and safekeeping of any medicines received into the children's home. In particular to ensure that any medicine is stored in a secure place so as to prevent any child accommodated there having unsupervised access to it. (Regulation 21 (1) (2a))	09/01/2015

Recommendations

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

- Children do not identify bullying as a problem at the home. Staff and children understand that bullying is unacceptable. Staff working in the home understand their role in helping to prevent bullying and counter bullying by any child living in the home. (NMS 3.11)
- Staff are easily able to access the advice needed to provide a comprehensive service for young people with specific regard to the consistent recording of group meetings. (NMS 19.7)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people come to this home because there are chronologies of concerns about personal safety and significant risk taking behaviours.

Young people no longer engage in high risk taking behaviours such as drinking alcohol or taking drugs. Consequently, they are developing an understanding of their own potential and begin to contemplate adulthood. One young person said: 'My life has completely changed. If young women have what it takes to change their lives, this is the place for them to come to.'

Young people develop a good understanding of the importance of their own physical and emotional wellbeing. They benefit from attending a range of health appointments. One parent said: 'My daughter has not looked so well in a long time.'

All young people receive encouragement to meet the expectation of attending classes for education consistently and the result is that overall, their attendance improves.

Young people who have significant gaps in their education are studying to sit GCSEs. In addition, they have the opportunity to attend college weekly and to access careers advice. This means that they are thinking about their future independence. One young person said 'I have worked out what I want for myself and it starts with sitting my exams and then getting a place at college.'

Young people take an active part in group food preparation. They learn every day skills in household management and personal care. Young people follow pathway plans and this means that they have the opportunity to practice safely their readiness for independence and adult life.

In support of the wider community, young people take part in a range of activities, for example, contributing to the local food bank and running in support of national charities. This encourages young people to develop an understanding of wider social and health issues.

Young people access regular contact with family which helps them to maintain significant relationships. Where family contact is not possible, young people receive emotional support to manage the impact of their relationships. This helps them to understand their background and builds resilience.

Quality of care

good

Staff provide one to one care. They have aspirations for the young people and are concerned for their welfare. Staff and young people develop positive relationships. One external agency said: 'I can see the respect that staff have for the young people and the good relationships they have developed.'

Staff expect young people to behave appropriately and frequently offer alternative suggestions when for example, language is inappropriate. As a result some young people develop an understanding of their impact on others. One young person said: 'The best thing that the staff have taught me is that my behaviour has consequences for me and other people.' Staff discuss bullying and through education support the national anti-bullying campaign. However this falls short because some of the young people identify bullying as a problem. This has an impact on their ability to feel relaxed within the home.

Staff consult with young people about the running of the home. Bedrooms can be personalised. For example, young people are encouraged to choose the colour of their walls. Staff help young people to purchase personalised accessories. Some young people have pet fish. This encourages them to value their personal space and take appropriate responsibility for the communal environment.

Young people are clear about the routes available to make a complaint. One young person said: 'I know that I can fill in a form or I could speak to my advocate but I also know that I could write to the owner of the company.' Managers deal efficiently with complaints providing verbal and written acknowledgement for young people. This helps young people to feel that managers take their issues and opinions seriously.

Every young person has an individualised plan which identifies the short, medium and long term placement goals. Plans reflect young people's personal identity and cultural background. Records document progress and identify personal achievement. Staff review plans regularly. Staff offer young people individual key time which includes the opportunity to take part in a sporting activity. Staff encourage young people to express their views about their individual plan for example, using a key time session to review the week. This sets the scene for young people's full involvement in their individual plan.

Staff ensure that young people access a range of health services including dentist and optician. Where young people show reluctance to attend appointments they are patient and tenacious, helping them to make better decisions. Staff make referrals to CAMHS and support young people to access the therapeutic services provided by the company. The result is that young people attend a range of psychological and health appointments which meet their individual needs. Staff have a system in place for the monitoring and dispersal of medication. The system falls short because the lock to the medicine cabinet was broken and there was a discrepancy in one young person's medication supply. This potentially compromises young people's physical health.

Qualified teachers provide education within the home. Staff proactively support young people to attend classes, take part in lessons and complete course work. The benefit for young people is that the staff team are consistent in their message which means that young people engage and develop confidence in their capacity to learn.

Staff provide a range of activities for young people which are sourced and reflect the individuality and interests of the young person. Opportunities include sport, leisure and foreign holidays. One young person said: 'The staff are great at getting us involved in different activities. If we show interest in something they will make it happen for us.'

The home is semi-rural in location however sport and leisure facilities are within reach by car. Staff have access to maintenance support which enables repairs to be actioned expediently. The premises provide sufficient accommodation for young people in both communal living and private space. This affords young people sufficient space for individual activity.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people clearly state that they feel and are safe in this home. One young person said: 'No one gets to come in to the house unless they show their identification.'

Incidents of missing from this home have reduced. Staff have knowledge of the local safeguarding procedures which, are put into action in the event of an incident. Unauthorised absences are short lived. Staff follow young people when they leave the premises without permission. Information recorded helps managers and staff to identify patterns and any additional supports required to keep young people safe. This means that effective internal and external systems are in place which, focus on young people's expedient return to the home.

All young people have behaviour support plans. High incidences of physical restraint have dramatically reduced. Staff use restraint as a last resort, to prevent young people from causing harm to themselves or others. A points system linked to financial incentives promotes positive behaviour, attitude and cooperation. This means that staff spend time talking with young people across each day to encourage them to make positive choices.

The managers carefully select and recruit staff to work in the home. Safe recruitment pre-employment checks are efficiently completed. All new staff shadow colleagues and receive an induction within their probationary period. All staff access training in safeguarding. This helps to ensure the suitability of adults working with the young people.

Managers investigate allegations. Liaison takes place with external agencies.

Managers write reports which outline the actions required to improve practice. This process contributes to a culture of keeping young people safe within the home.

Staff complete regular health and safety checks of the premises. Staff record and review individual risk assessments regularly. In each young person's bedroom, there is a specific fire evacuation plan. Young people have an appropriate understanding of risk and the action they are required to take in the event of an emergency.

Leadership and management

good

The Registered Manager has been in post since May 2013 and has completed the required level five management diploma in health and social care. She demonstrates compassion for the young people and their circumstances. She is committed to supporting young people to achieve their potential.

Managers have fully met the one requirement from the last inspection which, evidences commitment to improvement. The Registered Manager oversees all records of physical restraint and this provides an additional layer of quality assurance.

The internal monitoring system provides an overview of the performance and activities in the home. However, managers do not ensure the consistent recording of minutes from group meetings. This means that not all staff can easily access the information they need to provide a comprehensive service for the young people. The managers consult with agencies, parents and carers seeking feedback about the effectiveness of the home. Information received informs the service development plan. The Registered Manager updates the development plan and takes action to improve the physical environment and the internal systems. There is a shared understanding between the homes management team of the value that living at the home has. This is beneficial for the young people because the managers strive for continual improvement.

Staff receive formal supervision which provides an opportunity to discuss practice and identify further training needs. Staff access additional informal support from the Registered Manager. Staff attend training to support them in their role for example; managing home contact, youth support in education, protection from exploitation and working therapeutically. This means that managers provide staff with the opportunity to be effectively equipped to support the emotional and physical needs of the young people who live in the home.

Managers communicate effectively with other agencies and parents in relation to any significant events. Follow up action includes liaison with key stakeholders. Staff and managers attend young people's reviews. They provide written information which details progress and achievement. This helps to evidence the homes contribution towards improving the young people's life chances.

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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