

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC389823
Inspector	Janine Shortman-Thomas
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Courtyard Care Limited
Registered person address	Caroline House 146 Audenshaw Road Audenshaw Manchester M34 5HQ
Responsible individual	Colin Richard Gallimore
Registered manager	Jenny Marie Thompson-Kavanagh
Date of last inspection	27/02/2014

Inspection date	17/12/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action taken since the last inspection.

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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This is the first inspection since the home changed its name and varied its registration on 23 October 2014. Prior to this date the service provided care and accommodation to young people with a learning disability and or physical disability. This service now provides care and accommodation predominately to young people with mental health needs, who do not have a learning disability. Since the change in registration, the staff have experienced a transitional period and the young people have been living here for up to six weeks.

Some young people report they feel safe and are supported. They are complimentary about the quality of care they receive and feel staff are interested and concerned about their welfare. Some young people have constructive and trusting relationships with staff and express their views and frustration in an assertive and mature way. Most young people are growing in confidence in the community and have maintained positive relationships with their friends and families.

The Registered Manager shows a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development within the home. She is aware of the difficulties and shortfalls that the home has experienced recently, and together with the Responsible Individual is in

the process of reviewing the home's developmental plan to ensure these areas of concern are included to ensure they improve.

In order to promote the welfare and progress of young people two requirements and seven recommendations have been raised to improve outcomes for young people.

These relate to ensuring that managers undertake quarterly monitoring to address any areas of weakness in a timely way; ensure all plans, particularly child protection plans are understood by all and adhered to; ensure there is a formal process in place to escalate concerns when information requested from placing authorities is not provided; ensure young people are kept safe by implementing transparent, cohesive, multi-agency risk assessments which consider all areas of risk and the general health needs of young people; ensure all pre-employment checks are carried out prior to any member of staff commencing work; ensure that all staff receive appropriate training to deliver a high level of service to young people who have emotional and mental health needs; ensure the Statement of Purpose clarifies the experience and qualification of the present staff team; ensures the Children's Guide includes all relevant details for independent reviewing officers and independent advocates and is provided to all young people on their arrival and will ensure that the home provides a comfortable and homely environment for the young people, especially with regard to the young people's bedrooms.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities and/or mental disorders, excluding learning disability.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/02/2014	Interim	good progress
17/06/2013	Full	good
08/01/2013	Interim	good progress
13/06/2012	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
11 (2001)	ensure that the children's home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children accommodated there, specifically ensuring that any child protection plans which are in place are understood and implemented by all (Regulation 11(1)(a)).	30/01/2015
34 (2001)	ensure that managers maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at least once in every three months, ensuring that a copy of this review is supplied to Her Majesty Chief Inspector (Regulation 34 (1)(a)(2)).	30/01/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure young people are safe, specifically ensuring that all risk assessments are clear and include all risks such as secured ligatures and include consideration of the young persons physical health needs (NMS 4.1)
- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment that is well maintained and decorated, in particular addressing the ceiling in the fourth bedroom (NMS 10.4)
- ensure the Statement of Purpose provides clarity on the experience and qualifications of all staff presently delivering services (NMS 13.1)
- ensure the Children's Guide provides details of how young people can contact their independent reviewing officer and access an independent advocate if required (NMS 13.5)
- ensure all verbal checks for staff members are completed and recorded prior to employment (NMS 16.1)
- ensure staff are fully trained and equipped to meet the particular needs of young people in placement (NMS 18.1)
- ensure there is a formal process in place to escalate concerns when information requested from placing authorities is not provided, specifically in regards to placement plans and core group minutes (NMS 25.5).

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Young people have made adequate progress in developing a positive self-view, and show some knowledge and understanding of their background and plans for the future from their starting points. Some young people are clear about why they are unable to live at home and where they see themselves moving on to, whilst others report, 'I don't know why I'm here.'

Some young people are registered with doctors, dentist and opticians when they arrive, and have access to specialist children and adolescents mental health services which are commissioned by the home. Specialist services provide on-site weekly support to all young people to ensure their present and emerging emotional health needs can be met and maintained. That said, not all young people's general health has been assessed or considered when devising individual risk assessments. As a result risk assessments for managing self-harm have not been considered in conjunction with how the young person's physical well-being may be compromised and affected during any intervention identified.

Young people enjoy meals that they are involved in choosing and preparing, which are nutritious and meet their cultural needs. Young people are supported to access activities, both in the home and the local community in line with their hobbies and interests, such as going to the gym and cinema. However some young people continue to choose not to engage in any purposeful activities.

Some young people maintain relationships with important people in their life. They benefit from appropriate contact with family and friends. This contact is arranged and supported by the staff in line with the placing authority's plan.

Young people are being well prepared to become more independent in ways that are appropriate to their age and ability. They are encouraged to develop basic life skills through regular involvement in the running of the home, including keeping their rooms clean, washing up after meals and managing their money. They comment that they can shop, cook and know how to use the household appliances. As such, young people are equipped with the basic knowledge and skills they require to effectively prepare for independence.

Quality of care **adequate**

Young people are supported to share their wishes and views within their care planning and within the running of the home. Some young people complete, 'My life, My Goals' on moving into the home. This document highlights the areas young

people feel they need to focus on and how they are going to achieve this with the support of staff. Young people identify with this process, and through discussion that they wish to re-introduce contact with family members as they have a desire to move back to their family home following their placement. Whilst staff support young people to challenge some decisions a shortfall in providing young people with the Children's Guide with the contact details for independent reviewing officers and advocacy services on admission, has resulted in young people not being able to effectively challenge decisions which affect their lives.

Staff request information from all relevant parties to create individual risk assessments and care plans that staff use to inform their practice. These plans are reviewed and updated regularly following any significant event. Missing information is requested from social workers, commissioners and health establishments via email and telephone calls. However, this informal approach to addressing shortfalls has not been effective in ensuring external professionals meet their statutory obligations. For example, providing relevant placement plans and core group meeting minutes for all young people within the statutory timeframe.

Young people are developing positive relationships with staff and each other. Staff implement clear and consistent boundaries for young people, which young people are beginning to respond appropriately to.

Young people live in a home that is maintained to an acceptable standard. Young people comment that they are encouraged to personalise their rooms when they move in, however not all young people have chosen to do so. The bedroom ceiling in one unoccupied room requires further attention prior to this being used. The responsible individual and registered manager are aware that this is a recurring issue, and a maintenance plan is underway to complete the outstanding jobs that have been identified. This home is equipped and maintained to a high standard. The home is suitably located to access all the local amenities.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

There are shortfalls in the arrangements for keeping young people safe. Young people who are subject to Child Protection Plans have not been identified by the management team and as such have been supported to have extended overnight contact with their family. Whilst these contact arrangements have been discussed and agreed with the placing authority this has potentially left a young person at risk of emotional harm.

The recruitment practices in place for the appointment of new staff ensure that adults who may pose a risk to young people are not employed. A shortfall in relation to the verification of references was highlighted within the inspection. There is no documentary evidence to demonstrate that appropriate confirmation with referees has taken place. The Registered Manager confirms that she verifies references,

however the lack of written evidence does not fully support safe recruitment practice.

Staff work well with their specialist children and adolescent mental health service, which they commission, to ensure risk assessment and care plans are identified and in place to support young people on admission. These plans are driven by suitably qualified and trained health professionals and are reviewed and updated regularly both by the clinical and staff teams. The method of assessing the risks for each young person is adequate as these assessments are not always signed nor routinely shared with parents or placing authorities. The written risk assessments do not routinely identify each hazard and intervention to be implemented for all young people and do not take into account young people's physical health and how this may be comprised during identified interventions. For example the management of secured ligatures and any impact this has on the young person's general health has not been specifically covered in the risk management planning for one young person.

Staff are aware of the factors that may lead young people to go missing and take steps to reduce these. When young people have gone missing staff have followed the plans in place. If young people have remained away from the home for some time, staff have ensured the necessary meetings have been convened to ensure young people can be found quickly and returned back to the home safely. When young people return home staff provide reassurance and support to establish where they have been and why they needed to go. This has helped staff to understand young people's reasons for going missing, so they can provide appropriate support to reduce these behaviours.

Young people speak positively about the help they receive and feel that staff understand their needs. Emphasis is placed on rewarding positive behaviour, identifying triggers for negative behaviours, and avoiding the use of physical interventions. Young people are taught to resolve conflicts and frustrations in constructive ways.

The home provides a physically safe environment. Health and Safety checks are undertaken, including fire drills involving young people to ensure they know what to do in an emergency. All electric and gas services are subject to regular checks. This ensures young people live in a safe environment free from hazards.

Leadership and management

adequate

The Registered Manager has been registered with Ofsted since 18 December 2013; she has extensive management experience within an adult setting. She is presently undertaking the required manager's qualification and is hoping to complete this in 2015. To support the manager in any absence there is a team of competent and efficient team leaders.

The home employs a sufficient number of staff to care for young people. The staff

are enthusiastic and caring and work together to promote and support young people's development. Staff benefit from suitable supervision, with leaders and managers receiving fortnightly support and consultation from the therapeutic services which they commission. The majority of staff currently possess a recognised child care diploma qualification with the remaining staff working towards this. Whilst the majority of staff have recently undertaken a specific three day training programme to ensure that they can effectively meet the needs of the young people with emotional health needs, the home has yet to demonstrate how they will develop staff further in this area.

The Statement of Purpose and Children's Guide provides information about the home's aims and objectives, however further clarity is needed within both regarding the current staffing qualifications and experience, and relevant contact details for young people to access independent advocacy and their independent reviewing officer. These documents need to be shared with placing authorities and young people when they arrive, to ensure they know what they can expect to receive and who can support them with any challenges they may wish to make.

As part of the home's monitoring process, the provider ensures there are monthly Regulation 33 independent visits to the home. The visitor consults with young people, their families and social workers to obtain their views about the home and their care. The report produced highlights some areas for improvement, however this does not provide enough rigour and challenge to the responsible person or registered manager to continue to drive the service forward. The Registered Manager completes regular monthly monitoring, however has not provided any quarterly Regulation 34 reports to Ofsted since April 2014. The information within the monitoring has not been fully analysed to identify themes and trends which could be used to continually improve the service. The manager is clear and transparent about the strengths and weaknesses of the home and is in the process of addressing these through the revised development and action plan.

Overall the home's records give an account of each young person's admission. There is prompt notification of significant events relating to the protection of young people to the appropriate authorities as required. There were no requirements or recommendations made at the last inspection.

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.