

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	06/01/2016
Unique reference number	1027158
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's Home
Registered person	Unique Care Homes Support Limited
Registered person address	Holland House, 1-5 Oakfield, SALE, Cheshire, M33 6TT

Responsible individual	Paula Marshall
Registered manager	Angela Coulson
Inspector	Deirdra Keating

Inspection date	06/01/2016
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
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

1027158

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people benefit from tailored care that has created stability in their lives enabling them to make progress.
- Risk taking behaviour is minimal there is clear success in keeping young people safe.
- Attendance and engagement in education is consistently good.
- Behaviour is good, clear boundaries are maintained with a strong emphasis on positive reinforcement.
- There are effective working relationships with parents and external professionals.
- The staff team are led by the manager who is committed to improving the home and the quality of young people's experiences.
- The behaviour management plan and risk assessment for a young person has not been followed through in one instance. This was immediately identified by the manager who has addressed this.
- External monthly monitoring lacks depth; there are areas that have been overlooked.
- There are some procedures in relation to staff conduct and comfort breaks that have not been clearly defined.
- There are significant gaps in key worker records. Priority has been given to building relationships and assessing young people's needs. While this is of benefit these records are poor.

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

Recommendations

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

Ensure that details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risk on a day to day basis are followed. This is in relation to risk assessments. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 42 paragraph 9.5)

Ensure that all staff consistently follow the home policies and procedures for the benefit of the children in the homes care. This is in regard to providing clear guidance for staff in relation to using mobile phones and smoking on the premises. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 54 paragraph 10.20)

Ensure that the independent person makes a rigorous and impartial assessment of the homes arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the home. In particular the length and timing of the visit and monitoring the records supporting positive behaviour management.(The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 65 paragraph 15.5)

Ensure staff understand their important role in encouraging the child to reflect on and understand their history. Staff should keep and encourage children to keep appropriate memorabilia of the time spent living at the home and help them record significant life events. This is with regard to the upkeep of keyworker records. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 62 paragraph 14.5)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is one of three children's homes run by a private organisation which also operates a school. The home provides accommodation for up to six children who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. This is the services first inspection since registration.

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 are happy and are positive about the staff who care for them. They are aware of why they are at the home and recognise the benefits this provides. Those making transition to family homes say that they will miss the home. One young person said: 'I feel really settled here and it feels homely'.</p> <p>Relationships between staff and young people are good. Young people identify particular staff as being their 'rock'. This has helped young people build fundamental attachments. Staff facilitate activities and spend quality time with young people. Topical issues are explored with young people, however, these are not regularly captured in key worker records which are intermittent.</p> <p>Regular meetings with young people capture their wishes and feelings. Young people are willing to contribute in the knowledge that staff are keen to hear their opinions. A young person said: 'The meetings we have help us share plans, ideas and decide on food for the week. They cook things we like, the beds are comfy and the house is cosy. I feel at home.' Young people know they have a voice in the home and that their views are valued by staff.</p> <p>Young people have improved their physical health since being at the home. Access to health practitioners, correct diagnosis and medication has improved their health outcomes. Young people attend the dentist, the orthodontist and are encouraged to eat a healthy diet. Food is freshly cooked and provides balanced and nutritious meals. Young people sit around table enjoying social meal times. They have good table etiquette and assist staff with after-dinner chores.</p> <p>All young people have educational provision and attendance is good. This has been significant for several young people who have made extremely good progress in this area. This demonstrates evidence in attainment and engagement giving potential for them to access further education courses of their choice.</p> <p>Young people benefit from an orderly house and clear routines. This supports their attendance and attainment. They take part in group activities visiting; the cinema, theme parks, going to the coast and bowling. Young people prefer after school clubs and outings from the home as opposed to community clubs. This is representative of their age and preference to spend time with one another or</p>	

peers.

Transitions have been managed well especially given that two young people were placed with minimal notice. Parents and social workers have highlighted positive relationships with parents and support for young people returning to family homes.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>The home have been successful in keeping young people safe and reducing pertinent risks. Staff have a good understanding of risks and clear assessment of these guides safe practice. There have been no incidences of young people missing from the home, despite this being highlighted as a previous concern. Staff have helped young people change their responses. On one occasion a young person went missing while on contact. Staff collected the young person without delay and returned them to the home.</p> <p>Staff are confident about the management of risk and the particular triggers to young people who are at risk of exploitation. Staff are highly vigilant. Visitors to the home are challenged immediately and asked for identification. Risk assessments are detailed and robust. Rules are shared and consistently upheld. These measures are agreed with young people who are fully aware of why they are placed and are proud of the changes they have made since being at the home. A young person summarised: 'I am high risk at the moment and know that I kept going missing from the last home but have stopped this since being her.'</p> <p>There have been five physical interventions in five months. Supporting records include a debrief and are comprehensive. They demonstrate the necessity for the intervention. Staff are trained to ensure interventions are safe and recognised holds are used. However, one report shows that staff were not sensitive to the triggers for the young person as highlighted in their safety risk assessment. This could compromise their de-escalation strategies.</p> <p>Bullying is not identified as an issue. The dynamics between young people are relatively good. Young people speak kindly about one another and enjoy each other's company. Disagreements are minor and representative of a family home. The atmosphere is calm, young people appear relaxed and comfortable. They confirm that they feel safe and their belongings are safe.</p> <p>Staff adopt a non-punitive approach building on positive reinforcement and helping young people know that their efforts are appreciated. They are aware of young</p>	

people’s backgrounds and show acceptance and tolerance while maintaining safe boundaries. This has resulted in a high number of rewards in relation to few sanctions.

A robust location risk assessment ensures that police are aware of risks to individuals and supports staff in their efforts to minimise these.

The home is carefully maintained with regular service checks on appliances and fire prevention equipment. This protects young people from fire and household hazards.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>The registered manager has been in post since the home opened in September 2015. She is an efficient manager who was qualified to a level four and has completed her level five qualification without delay to support her managerial role. This demonstrates a committed approach to her ongoing professional development. Her previous management experience fully supports the conditions of registration provided by the home.</p> <p>The manager has built a staff team to support the increasing number of young people accommodated. There is a tiered management structure ensuring that staff roles are defined and staff are accountable. There is a strong focus on young people’s needs that has been successful in helping them make positive progress.</p> <p>The staff team are prepared for their roles. Mandatory training courses supports induction guiding new staff working with young people. This is enhanced by further training to ensure staff are equipped for specific aspects of the role. Staff receive regular supervision and support. There are, however, areas of staff conduct in relation to smoking and using mobile phones that are unclear and not supported by guidance. As such actions by staff could cause young people deemed unsafe to have mobile phones and those withdrawing from smoking addictions, unnecessary difficulty.</p> <p>The emphasis has been to set up and develop the home in response to placement referrals. The manager is decisive and provides strong leadership. This includes challenging professionals where required, advocating for young people and ensuring that the home only takes young people whose needs they can realistically meet. An example of this is that there will be no further admissions while the current group fully stabilise. The manager monitors events in the home and this</p>	

has led to actions and further training for staff. The monitoring by the independent person is adequate, but not rigorous. This has failed to identify shortfalls in behaviour management records and does not provide in-depth scrutiny of records.

Partnership working has worked well to keep young people safe. A preventative and planned approach with police and social workers has been effective in providing tailored safeguards for young people. The feedback from social workers and parents is extremely positive and highlights the benefits of the home on the individual young people.

The manager ensures that young people are fully represented, allocated with a social worker and care planning represents young people's requirements. She has been successful in challenging the local authority to ensure that these obligations are met and the home have a professional contact for each young person, receive their statutory visits and supporting documents.

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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