

## Children's homes inspection - Full

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>01/06/2015</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>SC367551</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered person</b>	<b>Crystal Care Solutions Limited</b>
<b>Registered person address</b>	<b>Nelson House, Boat Horse Road, Kidsgrove, STOKE-ON-TRENT, ST7 4JA</b>

<b>Responsible individual</b>	<b>James O'Leary</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Laura Richardson</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Elaine Cray Hannah Bates</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>01/06/2015</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.	
<b>how well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<b>the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>

## SC367551

### Summary of findings

#### **The children's home provision is requires improvement because:**

- Young people do not attend education. They fail to learn, develop and reach their potential because staff are not proactive in seeking education and alternative learning opportunities.
- Managers and staff do not consistently follow the home's and the host local authority safeguarding procedures. They also fail to robustly link indicators of potential child sexual exploitation.
- Poor staffing arrangements interrupt young people's stability and their sense of permanency.
- The home is not homely and does not fully meet the needs of the young people due to extensive damage and lack of regular repair.
- Managers and staff fail to meet key placement aims such as attending education. Lack of pathway plans and up to date annual medical assessments mean young people's needs do not promote best plans for young people.
- Leaders and manager do not challenge statutory partnership agencies such as placing authorities and local education services. The rights and needs of young people looked after at the home are not advocated by the leaders, managers and staff.
- Leaders, managers and staff do not implement some of the keys areas in the home's Statement of Purpose.

## The children's home strengths

- Young people benefit from trusting relationships with core members of staff. They have developed emotional resilience and their behaviour improves because they can talk to and trust staff. Staff stand by young people. This commitment pays off when young people with serious attachment challenges emotionally hug their key worker on leaving the home to live independently.
- Staff maintain constructive relationships with young people's families and this helps to promote safe and improved family contact arrangements.
- Managers and staff implement detailed risk assessments and maintain close working relationships with police, youth offending teams and drug agencies. This reduces young people going missing and getting involved in drug use and criminal activity in the local community.

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

### 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 (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>5. Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met.</p> <p>In order to meet the quality standard the registered person must ensure that staff:-</p> <p>(a) seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>(b) seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs;</p> <p>(c) if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans; and</p> <p>(d) seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. This is with particular regard to requirements from young people's statutory reviews not being met by the placing authority and education services.</p>	31/07/2015
<p>6. The quality and purpose of care standard.</p> <p>(1) In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard the registered person must ensure that children receive care from staff who:-</p>	31/07/2015

<p>(a) understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>(b) use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. This with particular regard to staff proactively seeking out and providing young people with access to learning and working opportunities.</p>	
<p>8. The education standard.</p> <p>In order to meet the education standard ensure that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure-</p> <p>(a) That staff -</p> <p>(i) help each child to achieve the child’s education and training targets, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans;</p> <p>(ii) support each child’s learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study;</p> <p>(iii) understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;</p> <p>(iv) help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment;</p> <p>(v) promote opportunities for each child to learn informally;</p> <p>(vi) maintain regular contact with each child’s education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child’s education and training and to maximise the child’s achievement;</p> <p>(vii) raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child’s education or training provider and the child’s placing authority;</p>	<p>31/07/2015</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(viii) help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible;</li> <li>(ix) help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment;</li> <li>(x) help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans; and</li> </ul> <p>(b) that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning.</p>	
<p>12. The protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard ensure that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>(2) In particular , the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure –</p> <p>(a) That staff -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;</li> <li>(ii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm.</li> <li>(iii) This is with particular regard to making links between possible indicators of child sexual exploitation.</li> <li>(v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</li> <li>(vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and</li> </ul>	<p>31/07/2015</p>

<p>(vii) are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies;</p> <p>(e) that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly.</p>	
<p>13. The Leadership and management standard.</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must enable, inspire and lead a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>(a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>(b) promotes their welfare.</p> <p>(2) In particular the registered person must—</p> <p>(a) lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>e) ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;</p> <p>(f) understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;</p> <p>(g) demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—</p> <p>(i) research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and</p> <p>(ii) feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and</p> <p>(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p>	<p>31/07/2015</p>
<p>14. The care planning standard.</p> <p>In order to meet the care planning standard the registered person</p>	<p>31/07/2015</p>



<p>must—</p> <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure –</p> <p>(e) that the child’s placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child’s relevant plans is requested, if—</p> <p>(i) the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child’s needs.</p>	
<p>The registered person must maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; this is with particular reference to a copy of the staff duty roster of persons working at the home, and a record of the actual rosters worked. These records must also include the hours worked by the registered Manager at the home. (Regulation 37.—(2) (a))</p>	<p>31/07/2015</p>
<p>Notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>(d) a child protection enquiry involving a child —</p> <p>(i) is instigated; or</p> <p>(ii) concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or</p> <p>(e) there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (d)(i)(ii)(4)(e))</p>	<p>31/07/2015</p>

### Recommendations

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

- ensure records for supervision evidence that supervision is carried out in line with regulation 33(4)(b) (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 61, paragraph 13.3)
- note and keep the content and/or outcomes of supervision sessions and ensure both the person giving the supervision and staff member have a copy of the record. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 61, paragraph 13.4)

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

This privately owned home is registered for three children and young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The Statement of Purpose details the age range of children and young people from 8 to 17 years of age.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/02/2015	CH - Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/07/2014	CH - Full	Good
31/01/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress

## Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<p><b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b></p>	<p><b>requires improvement</b></p>
<p>Extremely poor education attendance and lack of progress in learning compromise young people’s outcomes at this home. Young people do not attend education and they have minimal contact with alternative education arrangements. The home fails to meet young people’s specific placement objectives for the re-introduction to and attendance at education. Young people’s attendance over their 8 to almost 12 months placements is either minimal; ranging to sporadic. Young people have little prospect of reaching any potential, obtaining qualifications and gaining employment.</p> <p>Good relationships with staff and a monthly written consultation process give young people the opportunity to express their views. The manager also asks them about the recruitment of staff. However leaders and managers do not listen to young people’s views about key areas of running the home such as staffing. For example, young people’s meetings and key working records clearly show young people express feelings of sadness when staff are moved to work in other homes. Social workers also say inconsistencies in staffing have a negative impact on young people’s experiences and progress. However staff changes in the home remain high even though young people raise these concerns.</p> <p>Some young people’s social workers and placing authorities disadvantage young people’s placement planning because they do not provide pathway plans to map out transition to young adulthood. Some young people have not had up to date medical assessments. However, staff in the home have good regard to their own placement planning. Key working is regular and linked to young people’s aims and objectives. Young people record, read and are involved in the home’s recording systems. They form trusting relationships because staff support them to express their views about their placements and plans for the future.</p> <p>The registered persons fail to challenge placing authorities’ shortfalls and do not ensure young people have information about how to complain about their placing authority. The registered persons do not facilitate young people’s rights as looked after children because they do not challenge or formally complain to placing authorities. Even though some requirements from young people’s last two</p>	

statutory reviews remain unmet.

Young people have positive perspectives about living at this home. They value their relationships with staff and improve their behaviour. They say 'Staff are kind and caring and they have always been caring to me.'

Social workers also identify improvements in behaviour. They see young people becoming more confident and see the staff's strengths as 'good at understanding the behaviours and why they behave as they do and resolving situations and turning into positives.' Social workers say such improvement and strengths help some young people positively address some of the bullying they experienced in previous placements.

Young people become more independent. This includes travelling to and staying longer on family contact visits. They appreciate the support they receive from staff to budget and prepare them to leave the home. Social workers acknowledge the short notice given for some young people and fully appreciate the quick response staff give to help young people to prepare to leave the home and begin to live more independently.

Young people improve their physical and emotional health; but continue to smoke while living at the home. Some learn how to research and manage their own medical needs such as combinations of diabetes, epilepsy and asthma. The staff team's work with the diabetes nurse and drugs' agency has a good impact because young people now include themselves in this partnership working. They say and make concrete arrangements to continue to use these health networks when they move on to live independently.

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>requires improvement</b>
<p>The Registered Manager has failed to follow the home’s and local authority’s safeguarding procedures. Information and concerns about risks presented by a young person in the home were not directly referred to the local safeguarding children board. In addition, Ofsted did not receive a notification of this child protection concern.</p> <p>Managers and staff have also picked up on and responded to some issues regarding grooming. However inexperienced staff supervising family contact has resulted in a failure to fully explore significant background information so that robust safeguarding of young people from child sexual exploitation can be secured.</p> <p>Regular review of risk management strategies and protocols mean staff adapt their practice in light of young people’s changing circumstances. For example, staff increase vigilance in the home because they understand some young people’s family contact can lead to a greater likelihood of self-injurious behaviours and drug use. These strategies effectively support young people as episodes of self-injury decrease and young people are more able to identify their triggers for such risky behaviours.</p> <p>Going missing and episodes of self-harm significantly reduce as staff work in partnership with a range of agencies to give young people firm boundaries. Staff effectively implement clear and practical missing from care protocols. These are individualised and respond to the individual risks such as not taking medication for diabetes, young people potentially associating with drug use and the legal requirements regarding young people’s youth offending orders. Staff go out and look for young people, keep in contact by phone in addition to following required reporting procedures to the police. These practices give young people a good sense of security and they feel cared for.</p> <p>Staff have good insight into young people’s behaviour; which improves as a result of a combination of key working discussion, incentive plans and co-working with agencies. Working alongside the youth offending service helps young people reduce criminal activity. Working with child and adolescent services and the diabetes nurse helps young people to better manager self-injurious behaviours and safer self-administration of medication.</p>	

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>inadequate</b>
<p>The Registered Manager has managed this home on a permanent basis since September 2014. She has a National Vocational Qualification at level 4 in management. While the manager has suitable qualification and experience, she and the wider leadership team does not ensure young people make progress across all aspects of their development.</p> <p>Leaders, managers and staff do not achieve the aims and objectives as set out in the home’s Statement of Purpose; particularly in terms of staffing and providing a learning environment for young people. Poorly planned and under-resourced staffing arrangements interrupt the stability of young people. For example, staff from other homes, sessional and agency staff have to work at the home because leaders and managers maintain minimum staffing levels. There is no flexibility to cover standard absences such as annual leave, training and sickness. The home’s Statement of Purpose names five substantive staff working in the home. However the home regularly uses additional staffing, without any changes in occupancy in the home, over a period of several months. In April 2015 eleven different staff looked after young people of which only five were substantive. This inspection took place at the beginning of June 2015 and the home’s planned rota showed at least six shifts requiring staff cover. These absences were for planned events but young people were not aware who would be looking after them because the absences had not yet been covered.</p> <p>Also at the time of this inspection one of the two young people moved onto independence. This positive move for one young person negatively impacts on the other as some core staff members will automatically move elsewhere until the occupancy of the home increases again. These arrangements respond to the organisation’s needs, not the needs of the young people and part of the general staffing arrangements across the organisation. This constant disruption negatively impacts on the emotional well-being of young people, who already have significant challenges with forming and maintaining attachments.</p> <p>In addition to the lack of challenge by managers and leaders to placing authorities and education services; they have also not represented their concerns about placing authority moving-on plans for some young people. Not voicing these safeguarding concerns to the placing authority negatively impacts and compromises young people’s safety and their progress.</p> <p>The management strive to recruit and maintain a core staff team, with new staff</p>	

members receiving good quality induction training from the deputy manager. Lack of robust recording supervisions undermines the regularity of staff supervision. Lack of detail means leaders and managers do not have strong oversight of staff performance and the overall delivery of care to young people and their outcomes.

The physical standards in the home are substandard. While care staff work hard to fix damage in the home; organisational delays in attending to the extensive damage over a period of several months compromises young people's positive experiences and disrupts their daily routines. Furniture is damaged, for example, the Television is broken. There are no facilities for home study, such as easy access to computers, books and learning resources. From an emotional sense, young people witness constant damage to their home environment and this has a negative impact on their sense of safety and sense of well-being.

While complaints are resolved with the complainant; the manager does not fully harness the opportunity to investigate, learn from and therefore improve the service. For example, a recent complaint from a neighbour clearly shows that noisy behaviour from young people happened over a weekend when inexperienced staff were working at the home. Investigation notes are not available and the current concerns about staffing indicate little has improved since the complaint.

The management team in the home present a strong vision for the home to provide a nurturing and stable environment for young people. There are routine monitoring processes and the manager seeks to improve the 'tick box' approach and wants to focus on a more evaluative process in her managerial checks. This focus runs in tandem with a more evaluative process regarding what is actually happening in the home and how this impacts on young people'. However, at this current time; the long term failure to impact on local authority placement planning, lack of response to young people's feedback and the lack of insight into the negative impact of staffing demonstrates that management and wider leadership is unable to evaluate and rectify the weaknesses within the home.

## 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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