

Children's homes inspection — Full

Inspection date	9 June 2016
Unique reference number	SC428599
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Courtyard Care Limited
Registered provider address	Optima House, 100 Manchester Road, Denton, Manchester, M34 3PR

Responsible individual	Colin Gallimore
Registered manager	Elaine Evans
Inspector	Janine Shortman-Thomas

Inspection date	9 June 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
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

SC428599

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people confirm that they feel safe and are kept safe. Young people say that they get the right level of care and support from the staff team which they feel comfortable and happy with.
- Parents and professionals are extremely complimentary about the care and support that young people receive from the manager and her team. One parent said, 'They absolutely care for (name). The obviously care for them and it is evident in everything that they do for them. The staff have done well, they have had them the longest and have not given up on them. They do their best to keep (name) safe.'
- The staff demonstrate a good understanding of young people's needs. They work well with young people, their families and other agencies to ensure that young people's needs are addressed consistently and swiftly.
- Young people are supported sensitively by the staff team to maintain contact with those who they deem important to them.
- Young people benefit from successful transition planning for future placements within children's and adult's services because the manager and staff work closely and effectively with a range of partner agencies.
- A dedicated, experienced and qualified manager, who is passionate about improving the experience and lives of young people, leads an enthusiastic and supportive staff team in providing a good level of care and support to all young people.
- The shortfalls identified throughout this inspection relate to: the Statement of Purpose; staff qualifications; impact assessments for young people joining the home; the education arrangements for young people of compulsory school age; the external monitoring systems; and the annual health and safety arrangements.

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>8: The education standard</p> <p>In order to meet the education standard, the responsible person must ensure that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure –</p> <p>(a) that staff –</p> <p>(viii) help each child who is of compulsory school age but not attending school to access educational and training support throughout the period of non-attendance and return to school as soon as possible.</p>	8 July 2016
<p>14: The care planning standard</p> <p>In order to meet the care planning standard, the responsible person must ensure that children receive well-planned care from the home and have a positive experience of admission and transition processes. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that children –</p> <p>(a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.</p> <p>(b) have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p>	8 July 2016
<p>The registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. This is with particular reference to ensuring that all staff's qualifications are correct, the staffing arrangements are accurate and that the supervision arrangements of staff are</p>	08 Jul 2016

maintained as identified within this document. (Regulation 16 (5))	
The registered person must ensure that any individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification: the level 3 diploma for residential childcare (England) by the relevant date. In the case of an individual who starts working in the care role in the home on 1 April 2014, the date which falls two years after the date on which the individual started working in the care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1 April 2014, 1 April 2016 (Regulation 32(4)(a)(5)(a)(b)).	10 Dec 2016

Recommendations

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

- The registered person must comply with relevant health and safety legislation and ensure that the all annual checks, such as the gas safety checks are undertaken as required ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9).
- The registered person must ensure that any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person makes a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5).

Full report

Information about this children's home

- This home is privately owned and is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five children and young people who experience mental health disorders, excluding children and young people who also have a learning disability.
- The home accommodates both male and female children and young people between the ages of 10 and 17 years of age.
- The home enlists the support of a clinical psychologist within their care planning for children and young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11 January 2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
4 August 2015	Full	Good
7 January 2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
29 May 2014	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
<p>The stable staff team provides a happy and relaxed home environment where most young people report that they feel at ease. Most young people maintain positive relationships with the stable and consistent staff team, who provide a good level of individual care to each young people. This ensures that all young people continue to make some progress from their individual starting points.</p> <p>Staff work hard to provide a safe and supportive home to enable and support young people to benefit from improved emotional well-being. Young people and staff share positive and nurturing relationships, and good staffing levels allow young people the opportunity to receive the individual attention and support that they require during times of increased emotional anxiety and distress. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of young people's behaviours, vulnerabilities and risks and work consistently as a team and with other agencies to develop well-thought-out strategies to support young people appropriately. In addition, staff actively encourage and support young people to access and engage with the additional in-house therapy and additional support services to further aid them in their journey to positive emotional well-being and happiness. Furthermore, staff ensure that young people can access extra, external community adolescent mental health services as they require. This proactive and joined-up response promotes continuity of care for young people and prevents any further instability and disruption to the therapeutic input that they receive. This also enables young people to continue with their therapeutic journey as they maintain positive links with those professionals who they have already begun to know and trust. This ensures that young people's emotional health and well-being is constantly being considered, addressed and promoted.</p> <p>Young people's physical health needs are well promoted as they are registered with, and have access to, a range of generic health services. Young people are supported and empowered to attend routine medical appointments and are sympathetically encouraged and assisted to seek suitable medical attention as and when this is needed. Suitable systems are in place to monitor and review young peoples' medication and medication is administered by appropriately trained staff in line with young people's care plans. Young people are encouraged to eat a well-balanced and healthy diet and take part in exercise. This, in addition to good links with health professionals, ensures that young people remain in good physical</p>	

health as they get the correct level of health input as and when they need this.

Staff promote, support and enable young people to maintain strong links with those who are important to them. Staff ensure that young people's wishes and views are heard and acted upon and they facilitate contact for young people with family and friends sensitively, safely and in line with their requests. This supports young people's emotional well-being and helps them to maintain a positive sense of identity and belonging.

Young people are encouraged and supported well to increase their knowledge and develop skills they require to manage a successful transition into adulthood. Staff promote and enable young people to develop their self-care skills, alongside increasing their budgeting, planning, cooking and domestic skills in a safe and supported environment. This sense of achievement and increased confidence for some young people, alongside the effective working relationships with adult services, has positively assisted one young person with a smooth and productive transition into adult services.

Young people are supported thoughtfully and well throughout their transitions from the home. Staff provide young people with the correct amount of information about their new placement, facilitate introductory visits attentively and arrange farewell parties in line with the young person's requests. This enables young people to benefit from being involved in and part of their care planning, while also ensuring that young people benefit from experiencing planned and positive endings. That said, inappropriate matching and transition arrangements for some young people joining the home have had a detrimental effect on their and other young people's placements. Young people's admissions into the home are not always fully assessed prior to their admission and little consideration is given to how some young people's behaviours may impact on others within the home. As such, this has disrupted the experience and progress for one young person and has resulted in a further placement disruption and instability for another.

Not all young people's education needs are being adequately met as individual education provisions are not made available at the point of admission. As a consequence, one young person has moved into the home despite no suitable full-time education provision being in place. Furthermore, the lack of suitable interim arrangements in the home mean that some young people's education is further impinged upon and disrupted as their opportunities to learn and develop are greatly reduced. As a consequence, one young child has been without suitable education provision since joining the home on the 3 May 2016.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Young people report that they are safe and are kept safe within the home due to the actions and support that they receive from the staff. Young people confirm that they do not experience any bullying either within the home or within the local community and that the sanctions and consequences used within the home are fair and appropriate.</p> <p>Effective care practice is underpinned by good care planning and comprehensive and detailed risk assessments which are shared with young people and professionals routinely. The manager has standardised, reviewed and updated all young people's care plans and risk assessments and systematically shares these with the young person, placing local authority and the clinical psychologist for their review and input. This provides a cohesive and shared response to young people's needs and risks, and ensures that staff are provided with up-to-date information regarding young people's changing needs so that they can provide a constant and appropriate response to all young people. One health professional confirmed this during the inspection and said, 'We are included within all young people's risk assessments and these are shared with us. They send us all incident reports and this provides us with the evidence that what they are doing is consistent and thoughtful. The staff are trained, experienced, committed and do their best to help (name) to learn how to manage herself safely. There is an element of risk-taking and this is managed well. They have now got the balance right and they know when to step in and out.'</p> <p>The manager and staff have forged positive and effective working relationships with a range of agencies, including the placing local authorities, police, designated officer, and the missing from home co-ordinator. This collaborative approach, alongside detailed and comprehensive risk assessments, ensures that young people receive a well-planned and cohesive response during highlighted times of anxiety and distress. When young people do absent themselves from the home, the manager and staff make suitable efforts to search for and locate them. The staff inform all relevant agencies and support young people appropriately and sensitively on their return. The community police officer confirmed that the actions taken by the staff during these episodes are appropriate and they went on to say, 'Initially Independent Return Home Interviews were not being completed as these were not being triggered due to the amount of time the young person was away from the home. However, the manager is now forceful and ensures that these are always done.'</p> <p>The manager ensures that all the relevant safeguarding agencies and Ofsted are informed following any significant incident. For example, when there are complaints made against the home, or when young people place themselves at risk by engaging in self-harming behaviours or by running away from the home. As a</p>	

result, statutory agencies such as placing local authorities and the police can discharge their safeguarding duties promptly, while ensuring that young people can access any additional support and services quickly and effectively. Furthermore, the manager is appropriately assertive with partner agencies and ensures that young people receive the services that they require. She is proactive in requesting services, meetings and reviews when she considers that the home cannot continue to meet the young people's needs safely. This care practice serves to promote young people's safety and welfare.

The manager and senior management team deal with complaints against the home quickly and sufficiently. Young people are listened to carefully and any concerns or allegations they disclose are taken seriously and dealt with immediately by the management team. The manager ensures that she supports all parties involved within the complaint sensitively whilst the issues raised within this are fully investigated. The manager consults regularly with the designated officer when any allegations against staff are made and she shares all their findings with all the relevant agencies. The designated officer said, 'There is good management oversight of any allegations. They always make contact with me and kept me informed of their investigations at all times. They manage allegations well, they take them seriously, investigate them fully, and keep everyone updated.'

Despite positive relationships, good care practice and the best efforts of staff, some young people are unable to regulate their emotional responses effectively. During the inspection, the staff were heard to respond calmly and compassionately to one young person who was struggling to manage their emotions successfully. This supportive and nurturing approach led to the incident ending swiftly and with limited physical harm coming to the young person. In situations where young people are unable to manage their emotions safely, staff who are appropriately trained implement low level physical interventions appropriately.

Young people are kept safe in the home as staff receive good training and are aware of their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, the safe recruitment practice which is systematically undertaken ensures that only those staff who are deemed suitable to provide safe care and support to young people do so. Robust recruitment practice ensures that all staff working in the home, including the independent visitor and clinical psychologist, are vetted well and suitable to work with vulnerable young people.

The safety of staff and young people is adequately promoted as routine health and safety checks and fire drills are regularly undertaken by staff and young people. Young people confidently discuss the fire evacuation procedure with visitors to the home and feel assured that they would know how to respond correctly if the need was to arise. That said, not all health and safety checks are carried out as required and the annual gas safety check has not been reassessed or reviewed as necessary.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>The home is led and well managed by an experienced and qualified manager who has been registered with Ofsted since May 2015. She is ably assisted by her three team leaders who share her dedication and passion to continue to deliver a high standard of good quality care to all young people as outlined within the homes recently updated statement of purpose. While the home continues to function within the child-focused ethos identified in this document, the present staffing arrangements, staff qualifications, and the commitments identified in regards to staff supervision are not accurate or systematically maintained.</p> <p>The manager has suitably addressed the one requirement and two recommendations previously raised. Young people's contact is no longer being used as a sanction to manage inappropriate actions of young people. Furthermore, young people are now systematically offered a safe space following any significant incident which allows them the time and space to reflect on their actions, such as when they have been missing from the home, or engaged in self-harming behaviours. This gives young people the opportunity to consider and identify alternative methods they may use to manage their thoughts and feelings more appropriately and safely. In addition, the registered manager is now fully evaluating all significant incidents to ensure that these are managed and responded to in a consistent, safe and suitable manner.</p> <p>Young people confirm that the information that they receive regarding the home prior to their arrival is satisfactory. They confirm that the children's guide is shared with them prior to their admission so that they know what they can expect when they arrive, the services that are in place to support them and the avenues and support services they can access should they need to.</p> <p>Professionals are supportive of the staff's approach to meeting young people's complex and challenging health needs and attribute the progress they make to the resilience, efforts and dedication demonstrated by the manager and staff. One healthcare professional said, 'The staff continue to meet (name's) needs brilliantly. The staff are caring, committed and understand her needs well. They provide a consistent and safe approach, providing a number of "normal day routines" to allow them the opportunities to continue to develop their everyday routines in a safe way.' They went on to add, 'They continue to provide placements when the going gets tough. They are committed to supporting young people so they can develop relationships with the staff and undertake the therapy that is needed.'</p> <p>The manager and staff ensures that all young people remain central to their care planning as their wishes and views are sought regularly and acted upon appropriately. Staff advocate strongly and support young people to contribute to</p>	

their care plans and risk assessments and work with parents and other professionals successfully.

The home employs a suitable number of committed staff who are trained, supported and experienced to deliver a good standard of care for all young people. While some staff have the required qualifications, others are in the process of achieving these. While there is a suitable plan in place, which the manager regularly monitors, to ensure that all the staff acquire the necessary national vocational qualifications, three members of staff have not achieved these within the prescribed timeframe.

The manager has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development for the home as she has a number of systems in place to assist her with this. For example, the manager uses weekly manager returns, regular feedback from family members, young people and professionals, and weekly and monthly internal reporting systems to gauge a good understanding of all young people's progression and areas for continued work within the home. This, alongside the adequate external monthly monitoring, supports the manager in her development of her service planning. However, while the manager utilises the information gathered from the monthly independent visitors' reports to support her evaluation and succession planning for improving young people's experience and progress, the independent visitor does not routinely offer any rigorous scrutiny of how young people are safeguarded within the home to support the manager further in her monitoring, evaluating and developing this aspect of the service further.

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 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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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