

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	22/08/2016
Unique reference number	SC436826
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	CASC (Barrow) Limited
Registered provider address	125 Ramsden Square, Barrow in Furness, Cumbria, LA14 1XA

Responsible individual	Hilary Southward
Registered manager	Rachel Arts
Inspector	Charlie Bamber

Inspection date	22/08/2016
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	Requires improvement
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.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC436826

Summary of findings

The children's home provision requires improvement because:

- The home is not staffed with a full complement of permanent staff. This results in some inconsistency for the young people. Although they are familiar with all the staff caring for them, this does not make up for the lack of regular staff for them to develop trusting relationships with.
- There has been a large staff turnover, which has an impact on staff morale. Staff can at times feel 'overwhelmed'.
- There have been three managers in the post of registered manager or acting registered manager in the past 12 months, which has affected both the staff team and the young people.
- Young people engage in negative behaviour towards each other which can escalate to bullying. While the staff do try to address this, they do not always have strong enough relationships with the young people to positively influence their behaviour.
- Some young people have serious incidents of self-harm. On occasions a contributory factor is the feeling that they are being bullied by other residents.
- Medicines are securely stored and carefully administered in the home. Recording of medicines for one young person shows a quantitative error.
- Records of young people's health assessments are not always available in young people's files, which could hamper the delivery of care to meet their health needs, although there is no current evidence of this having a detrimental impact.
- Missing from home records are not kept for each child individually when young people have gone missing together. This results in a lack of clarity in recording.
- Some young people are not making good progress at the home. Their progress is impeded by the departure of staff who they have close relationships with, and by poor peer relationships.

The children's home strengths

- Young people's individual needs are understood and staff have a good understanding of their specific requirements.
- Some good progress is made in relation to contact and education for young people, and clear plans are progressed, for example a return home to parent's care for one young person.
- Young people who have no suitable educational provision when they arrive at the home have education identified for them and are helped to settle into a school environment.
- Placement matching and transitions are well managed.
- Risk assessment for young people is a strength of the home and they have successfully managed some high risk behaviours.
- The home has developed good links with external agencies and works closely alongside their partners to provide coordinated care to young people.
- When young people go missing from home they are always provided with the opportunity for an independent return interview.
- Young people have ample opportunity to share their views and are supported to do so through key worker sessions and young people's meetings.
- Most young people report positive relationships with staff members.
- Managers of the home have a good understanding of the homes strengths and weaknesses and have clear plans in place to address areas identified for improvement.

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 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>11: The positive relationships standard</p> <p>In order to meet the positive relationships standard the registered person must ensure that staff:</p> <p>(2)(a)</p> <p>(iv) Help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;</p> <p>(xi) De-escalate confrontations with or between children or potentially violent behaviour by children;</p> <p>(xiii) Have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them.</p>	23/09/2016
<p>31: Staffing of children's homes</p> <p>(1) The registered person must ensure that the employment of any person on a temporary basis at the children's home does not prevent the children from receiving such continuity of care as is reasonable to meet their needs.</p>	24/10/2016
<p>36: Children's case records</p> <p>The registered person must maintain case records for each child which include information and documents listed in schedule 3 in relation to each child. Specifically details of any health assessment and individual missing from home records. (10)(a)(14) and (24)</p>	23/09/2016
<p>23: Medicines</p> <p>(1) The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home.</p>	23/09/2016
<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>(2)(c)</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard the</p>	23/09/2016

registered person must ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. Specifically that each member of staff is fully trained in therapeutic crisis intervention (TCI).	
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Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home is registered to accommodate and care for four young people of either gender aged between 11 and 17 years. The young people accommodated experience emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home accepts emergency placements and can offer care to young people on a short-, medium- or long-term basis.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
04/11/2015	Full	Good
25/11/2014	Interim	Improved effectiveness
29/05/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
<p>Young people at this home show mixed progression from their point of placement. Some make good progress with their plans and are supported towards positive transitions, while for others progress falters due to a combination of factors.</p> <p>Since the last full inspection two additional young people have been admitted to the home. The quality of matching is good and the transitions, where possible, are well thought through and support the young people. However, the additional young people have had an impact on the dynamics of the home and young people's relationships have been difficult and at times damaging to each other. Staff are able to identify negative behaviour but are not always sufficiently skilled and experienced to deflect, de-escalate or address behaviour that is negative and hurtful. This can result in young people having poor relationships and in turn this has some impact on their emotional well-being. Some young people engage in self-harming behaviours and report that their peer relationships are a contributory factor.</p> <p>Young people report generally positive relationships with staff. Some key staff members have left the service or are absent for other reasons and this affects the progress of some young people. The lack of stability within the staffing team results in young people not investing in their relationships as much as they could. This affects both their behaviour and the progress they make in respect of emotional and social development.</p> <p>There is a positive take-up of services which support young people's emotional well-being such as SAFA (self-harm awareness for all) and CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health services). Young people's health needs are met and good health is promoted. The home does not always ensure that young people have a health assessment or plan on their case file. This issue was rectified at the time of the inspection but a requirement is made due to the potential impact of this on young people's health.</p> <p>Education is promoted within the home. Young people who previously were not in education have been successfully introduced to new educational provisions which allow them opportunities to progress educationally and socially. Where young people's education plans are not in place the home chases the placing authority for them. One young person who has been out of education for some time has secured a college placement for September and has also obtained a part-time job, which promotes independence.</p>	

Young people's views are actively sought and are well understood. Where young people are not in their preferred placement the home support and advocate for them and help prepare them to move on. Key-worker sessions can be of a good quality and young people's wishes and feelings are sought and recorded in a number of different and positive ways.

There are many opportunities for leisure activities, with an activity planner with a range of different outings for the summer holidays in the home. Young people are encouraged to participate but do not always take up the activities on offer due to conflicting choices and difficult relationships between them. One young person has been involved in some charitable fund-raising and has further plans for involvement in this area.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
<p>Risk assessment is a strength of the home and young people's safeguarding needs are clearly understood and recorded. There is a strong focus on managing risks in relation to child sexual exploitation (CSE), which is a high risk factor at the point of placement for some young people. Where further risks are identified in this area, good multi-agency work takes place to address the risk. The home has good links with the police and with the young people's placing authority to ensure positive risk management. Staff are skilled at recognising the signs that a young person may be a victim of CSE.</p> <p>Young people at this home can behave in highly negative, cruel and hurtful ways towards each other. This bullying behaviour has an impact on their safety, with one young person reporting, 'no, I don't always feel safe in the house because [young person] threatens me'. Others have suicidal intent which they attribute in part to bullying within the home. The home's response to incidents of bullying evidences that they do make efforts to address this behaviour, although the impact of their efforts is insufficient to ensure that young people always feel safe. Young people report that at times staff are unable to prevent what start as trivial arguments from escalating into serious situations.</p> <p>Staff are well attuned to young people's moods and aware of when they are going into crisis. They have appropriate support measures in place such as regular checks on young people if there are concerns that they may self-harm. There have been some serious incidents of self-harm since the previous inspection. The home work well to support young people through these incidents and work closely with other agencies to develop safety plans which protect them.</p>	

Young people go missing from home, although this is usually only for short periods. Staff are proactive about looking for young people when missing and trying to keep in contact with them. Independent return interviews are always offered and the home complete their own safe return interview to identify any patterns or issues to be addressed. Recording of missing from home episodes is not always completed for each individual child who has been missing.

There are no incidents of physical restraint recorded since the last full inspection and staff report that they would always use de-escalation and discussion to address challenging or damaging behaviour. Staff are not fully training in TCI (therapeutic crisis intervention) techniques and could not therefore safely intervene should the need arise.

Medicines are stored safely and there is a system in place to ensure that they are administered correctly. Systems for recording when medication is sent home with young people and the quantity returned need to be in place to ensure no mistakes are made in recording quantities of medication.

Investigations into allegations are managed in accordance with statutory guidance and information is shared with agencies appropriately. Where other agencies do not respond in a timely manner the home keeps in regular contact to discuss progress. Young people are kept informed of progress in respect of any allegations that they make.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
<p>The home has undergone some changes in management over the past 12 months, with three people having fulfilled the role of registered manager or acting manager. Management arrangements are now settled, with a clear management structure in place. The current acting manager is awaiting registration and the former manager has returned in a senior post of operations manager, where she will continue to support the management of the home. The acting manager is enrolled on the level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare, with a completion date of September 2017.</p> <p>The current acting manager is passionate about improving the service and providing the best possible care to the residents of the home. She is well attuned to the young people's needs and shows drive and commitment to improving their outcomes.</p> <p>The manager, along with the operations manager, have a clear understanding of the home's areas for improvement and have already put steps in place to address</p>	

some of the areas identified. There is a clear plan of improvement in place for all areas of weakness.

Some areas for improvement have been noted in induction, supervision and training, and newly recruited staff are already benefiting from a thorough and tailored induction package which should prepare them well for work at the home. Staff report feeling supported and that supervision is frequent and effective. Regular team meetings take place which give staff the opportunity to share their views. These meetings can be used as forums for training and staff development.

Staff morale is low due to the low numbers of permanent staff. Managers are working hard to respond to this, with a number of new staff recruited and a team day planned to improve morale. There are not, at present, sufficient permanent staff to provide continuity of care to the residents. A reliance on relief staff ensures that the home is always adequately staffed by people who the young people know, but this does not meet the young people's need to form strong, trusting relationships with regular permanent staff.

The quality of professional relationships between the home, families, placing authorities and other external agencies is good. Social workers report positively of the service, particularly in respect of young people being helped to make positive transitions into the home.

The home is achieving its aims and objectives as set out in its statement of purpose.

The home has addressed the previous requirement made in relation to recruitment procedures and a revised system is in place to ensure that all relevant documentation is kept on employees' files.

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 children 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 that 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 that 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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