

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	26/10/2016
Unique reference number	SC020151
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Country Care Children's Homes Limited
Responsible individual	Rachel Dowle
Registered manager	Janine Morrell
Inspector	Cathey Moriarty

Inspection date	26/10/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved 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

SC020151

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people with a range of vulnerabilities are significantly reducing their risk-taking behaviours. They are building trusting and nurturing relationships with staff.
- Young people have good and improving education attendance and attainment, often from low starting points.
- The home provides a comfortable and caring environment. Young people benefit from looking after pets.
- Therapists work directly with young people and provide consultation to care and education staff. This means that there is a consistent approach to care.
- There is very good partnership working with a range of local agencies and resources, as well as placing local authorities. This means that young people benefit from good multi-agency working to progress their plans and meet their needs.
- A recommendation is made that all staff receive training in responding to allegations against adults who work with children.
- A requirement is made for the registered manager to ensure quality assurance systems are effective in driving improvement. This is with specific reference to monitoring local authority plans, and providing an effective response to recommendations made by the independent visitor.

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The leadership and management standard: 13 (2) the standard requires the registered person to– (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	31/01/2017

Recommendations

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

- Staff need the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate a child is at any risk of harm. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.2.) This is with specific reference to providing training for staff in allegations against adults who work with children.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is privately owned. It provides care and accommodation for up to eight young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
22/09/2015	Full	Good
24/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
05/08/2014	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
<p>This children's home provides good-quality, child-centred care with therapeutic interventions and education on-site. Young people make good progress from their starting points. Throughout the inspection, young people presented as positive, comfortable and happy to chat to the inspector.</p> <p>The home provides a comfortable, well-decorated and well-maintained environment. There are house pets and a therapy dog that the young people find soothing. There are also good connections with a nearby stables and young people enjoy horse riding lessons, learning to care for horses and helping the stables' staff. As a result, young people are developing new skills and interests.</p> <p>Young people make good progress in education. They have often had difficult and disrupted experiences in education. Staff are aspirational for the young people and encourage and support education attendance. Young people are also rewarded for education attendance and for meeting targets. For all of the young people, their engagement in education has significantly improved. One social worker said, 'Before this young person moved here, she was not attending education and we were very concerned about keeping her safe. She is now responding to the structures and boundaries in place and has built relationships with the staff and the other young people. She now has aspirations about her future.'</p> <p>The home commissions therapeutic interventions for young people. As part of the planned admission process, a clinical psychologist undertakes an assessment of therapeutic needs. Therapists work directly with young people and provide consultation with care and education staff. This means that there is a consistent approach to care. The therapeutic model is aimed at helping young people to regulate behaviours. Therapeutic sessions provide tools to help young people change their responses to some difficult feelings. The skills and knowledge of the therapeutic staff help young people to reduce risk-taking behaviours.</p> <p>Staff consult with young people about their care. Young people are involved in making decisions about the decor of the rooms, menus and activities. They can choose their activities and are supported to develop new interests and hobbies. Young people are encouraged to read their records and contribute to their planning meetings. There are regular young people's meetings. Recently, staff have listened to the views of young people and changed the frequency of these meetings. Young people report that they know how to make complaints. They are confident in raising concerns.</p> <p>Staff support young people to have safe, constructive contact with their families. Some young people have improved relationships because of staff promoting and sensitively supervising family contact. A parent said that, 'Staff really listen to my</p>	

daughter. They have supported us to have better contact.’ Another family member said, ‘She used to go missing but, since living in this home, this has changed. Staff are keeping her safe. This is a relief. I think she has started to understand that if she works with everyone, things will get better for her. She is also beginning to understand that education is really important.’

Young people have detailed health plans, and regular preventative health appointments. A specialist nurse calls in and supports staff with raising awareness about health issues such as healthy diet and exercise. As a result, young people’s health needs are being met and they become healthier. One of the young people was in hospital for a minor operation at the time of the inspection. She was provided with nurturing, sensitive care to support her recovery.

All admissions to the home are well planned. The manager takes into account the needs of the young people already living in the home when considering admissions. Due to some of the complex needs of the young people and their recent experiences, there is sometimes a phased introduction to the home to support the transition. At the point of admission to the home, young people receive detailed information about the home and are given clear expectations about boundaries and routines. They have weekly planners, take responsibility for their rooms and share some tasks around the home that support the development of independence skills. The young people get on really well with the housekeeper, who supports them with a range of practical tasks and learning.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Young people have detailed placement plans that include risk assessments, behaviour management plans and guidance for all staff in the best way to respond to each young person’s needs. These plans are informed by previous assessments, the young person’s history and the assessment of therapeutic needs undertaken for the placement. However, not all young people had up-to-date local authority plans. This has the potential to limit the effectiveness of the home’s care planning systems.</p> <p>Staff work closely with local safeguarding agencies to keep young people safe.</p> <p>There are few incidents of young people leaving the home without permission. When young people do go missing, staff follow missing from care procedures diligently and liaise with police, social workers and families. Independent return interviews are undertaken and staff work with young people to prevent further incidents.</p> <p>Some young people are vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Staff use the local authority’s assessment toolkit and have risk assessments and guidance in place to manage risks. There are clear boundaries around the use of mobile phones, access</p>	

to Wi-Fi and the use of social media that support young people to be safe. Staff have received training and are aware of the risks associated with the use of digital technology.

All staff are trained in safely managing aggressive and harmful behaviours. They use distraction and de-escalation techniques and will only physically intervene as a last resort to prevent young people from harming themselves. The detailed records demonstrate that there are very few incidents of physical intervention. Young people are offered medical attention and are supported and talked to after such incidents. Staff respond to incidents of self-harming behaviour appropriately and sensitively. Young people who have a history of substance misuse before moving into the home, including smoking, are supported to stop and are carefully monitored.

Since the last inspection, there has been one allegation made by a young person against a member of staff. The registered manager referred to the designated officer appropriately so that the matter could be independently investigated. The matter has been concluded and lessons learned. A young person has made one complaint. The manager investigated promptly and this has been resolved.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>The registered manager is an experienced and suitably qualified leader. The management team is good at problem solving because they know the home's strengths and areas for development. The stable staff team is experienced and skilled. Staff are encouraged to share ideas about practice and are provided with a range of training opportunities. Staff report that they are well supported and receive regular supervision.</p> <p>A detailed development plan is in place that includes plans to create a satellite service for young people in crisis or as part of phased transitions from the home. Given the vulnerabilities of the young people and plans for use of the cottage, it is recommended that as part of the workforce development plan, all staff receive training in responding to allegations against adults who work with children.</p> <p>The team works closely with partner agencies to enhance the care that young people receive. There are excellent working relationships with local police and health resources such as the GP. A specialist nurse also regularly calls into the home. Education, care and therapeutic staff all share information and pool resources so that they can identify and respond to all emerging needs. Staff send weekly updated chronologies to case responsible social workers and alert them to any new information or concerns immediately. Generally, information sharing is good. This helps young people to progress and promotes placement stability.</p> <p>However, this inspection identified some inconsistencies in the maintenance of</p>	

records and not all up-to-date local authority plans were available in the young people's files. The independent visitor has also identified these issues. A requirement is made that the registered manager ensures that quality assurance mechanisms are more effective by acting promptly on the recommendations of independent visitors.

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 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 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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