

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	08/11/2016
Unique reference number	1223681
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Sandcastle Care Ltd
Registered provider address	19 Rossall Road, Thornton Cleveleys, Lancashire, FY5 1DX

Responsible individual	Michael Swarbrick
Registered manager	Gina Elston
Inspector	Rebecca Quested

Inspection date	08/11/2016
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	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

1223681

Summary of findings

The children's home provision requires improvement because:

- The registered manager does not undertake effective impact risk assessments. As a result, young people experience short placements because staff are unable to meet their needs.
- On one occasion, the registered manager accepted the placement of a young person whose needs were outside the range of needs included in the home's registration and set out in the home's statement of purpose. The young person's placement lasted just 11 days. This does not promote young people's welfare.
- Staff do not consistently risk-assess young people's behaviour effectively. This means that staff are ineffective in minimising risks to young people and preventing harm. This relates in particular to smoking in bedrooms, young people sleeping in each other's bedrooms and sexual exploitation.
- Staff do not manage relationships between young people to prevent them from harming each other.
- Leaders and managers do not obtain the consent of placing authorities when electronic monitoring is used to monitor young people.
- Leaders and managers do not ensure that all staff are qualified to Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare within two years of beginning to work in residential care.
- Leaders and managers do not ensure that they obtain young people's essential documentation from placing authorities, and they do not ensure that this is stored when young people leave the home.
- Leaders and managers do not ensure that case records are always clearly legible. This is not helpful for the young person, or anyone else, in being able to understand their history.

The children's home strengths

- Staff develop positive relationships with young people. They listen carefully to them and understand what is important to them. As a result, some young people are able to talk to them about what is difficult.
- Staff promote young people's positive relationships with family and friends, which maintains their sense of identity.
- Staff support young people to engage and progress with their education.

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
<p>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>To meet the protection of children standard the registered provider must ensure that:</p> <p>2(a)(i) staff 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. In particular, this relates to ensuring that risk assessments are accurate and up to date.</p> <p>2(a)(iv) staff manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other.</p>	31/12/2016
<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>To meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must:</p> <p>2(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>	31/12/2016
<p>14: The care planning standard</p> <p>In order to ensure the care planning standard is met the registered provider must ensure that:</p> <p>1(a) children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and (b) have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>2(a) children are admitted to the home only if their needs are</p>	31/12/2016

within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose.	
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance. (Regulation 24(1)(b))	31/12/2016
The registered person must ensure that an individual who works in the home in a care role has attained the appropriate qualification, the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) by the relevant date. In the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1 April 2014, the relevant date is 1 April 2016. (Regulation 32(4)(5))	31/12/2016
The registered person must maintain records for each child which: (a) include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to a child; (b) are kept up to date; and (c) are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36(1))	31/12/2016
The registered person must keep case records in a secure place after the child has ceased to be accommodated in the home. (Regulation 36(2)(d))	31/12/2016

Recommendations

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

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for up to four children of a single gender with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home forms part of a social care company.

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>Requires improvement</p>
<p>This is the first inspection of this home, which has been open since April 2016. During this period, managers have admitted six young people to the home and three have left the home. Young people’s outcomes are mixed. Some young people experience very short placements in the home because staff are unable to meet their needs. Some young people do not make progress, and staff are unable to safeguard them from causing harm to others or from being harmed themselves. This does not promote young people’s welfare.</p> <p>Other young people do make progress, and staff develop positive relationships with these young people. They spend time getting to know them and understanding what is important to them. Young people value their relationships with staff. As one young person said, ‘Staff treat you nice, like you are their own children.’ As a result, young people are able to talk about what is difficult. Some young people make progress in regulating their emotions, and begin to talk about their early life experiences.</p> <p>Staff ensure they understand young people’s views. They have regular meetings with young people to agree on what activities and food they would like. Young people personalise their rooms, and contribute to ideas about the development of the home. Staff encourage young people to have pets, and young people thrive with the additional responsibility that brings. Staff encourage young people to develop their own identity, and this boosts their self-esteem.</p> <p>Staff support young people to engage in education and to make progress. Managers develop positive relationships with the virtual school headteacher and education providers to ensure that young people can access education that meets their needs quickly. Staff maintain structure and routine for young people while they secure placements for them. Staff encourage young people to gain confidence to cope in full-time education when they have been away from the education environment for long periods. A tutor said, ‘Staff see learning as a positive and personal experience for my young person. I think she is happier now and you can tell staff care about her.’</p> <p>Staff support young people to engage with universal and specialist health services. Young people develop positive relationships with the children looked after specialist nurse, and access referrals to substance misuse where necessary. This promotes young people’s emotional and physical health.</p> <p>Staff support young people’s contact with family and friends where that is safe and</p>	

in young people’s best interests. They encourage positive relationships, including for those young people who are placed a long way from home. This promotes young people’s self-esteem and identity.

Young people engage in activities within the home and the community. They enjoy board games, going to the cinema and visiting local attractions such as Blackpool illuminations. Staff encourage young people to develop their own interests in horse riding and cadets. This boosts young people’s self-confidence, as well as being fun.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
<p>Staff do not assess effectively whether each young person is at risk of harm, and do not make arrangements to reduce that harm. Staff do not enforce boundaries and risk assessments consistently. Staff do not always monitor young people closely in the home, as detailed in risk assessments. They allow young people to spend time in each other’s bedrooms during the day, and to sleep in each other’s bedrooms at night. Staff do not prevent young people from taking mattresses into each other’s rooms, and do not prevent them from shutting doors when more than one young person is in the room. This does not safeguard young people from risk of harm, and does not promote their welfare.</p> <p>Staff are unable to stop young people from smoking in the home, and over time they continue to smoke in the home. Staff do not have risk assessments in place that detail how to minimise the risk from this dangerous activity. Although staff complete key-work sessions with young people which state that young people must hand in all smoking paraphernalia, young people continue to smoke in their bedrooms at times. Rather than address the serious risks that smoking in the house represents, staff complete key-work sessions with young people which record that the sanction for smoking is to pay for air freshener.</p> <p>Staff have not received training in child sexual exploitation. Staff are not alert to issues of child sexual exploitation when young people return from being missing or absent from the home. They do not respond robustly to concerns that young people are at risk, or work with local child sexual exploitation services to ensure young people improve their understanding and decrease their risk-taking behaviour. For example, staff do not update young people’s risk assessments to reflect their risk-taking behaviour. They complete some key-work sessions around the risks of being missing from home, but these are not sufficiently detailed and are not specific to sexual exploitation. Staff do not support young people to understand how to become safe, and do not ensure they benefit from constant supervision. Consequently, young people are able to leave the home. One young</p>	

person subsequently alleges that a serious sexual offence took place when she was absent from the home. The temporary manager recognises this shortfall, and has organised for the local multi-agency child sexual exploitation service to provide training for staff.

Since the home opened, there has been one incident of bullying, when a young person assaulted another young person. Staff were unable to prevent the young people from harming each other, so the registered manager served notice on the young person's placement. This safeguarded the remaining group of young people from further harm.

Some young people become increasingly safe. Young people report feeling safe, and are able to identify a trusted adult to talk to within the home. Staff develop strategies to reduce risks associated with young people's self-harming behaviour. Staff receive specialist training, and work closely with the in-house therapist to ensure they are responsive to young people's complex needs.

Staff promote positive behaviour to good effect. Staff reward positive behaviour daily, with verbal praise and rewards. This helps young people's self-confidence to grow. One young person said, 'Things have progressed massively; it has been proper good with my emotions. I feel happy since I have lived here.' Staff are skilled in de-escalation techniques, and restraint is rarely used. When restraint is necessary, all appropriate details are recorded, and debriefs are conducted with young people and staff to improve practice.

Staff usually understand how to respond to young people who go missing. Staff develop positive relationships with the local police, including the missing from home coordinator. They work in partnership with the police in developing missing from home protocols, which ensures that young people are missing for the minimum time. Staff always look for young people when they go missing. They follow them, and try to persuade them to return to the home. Staff understand where young people might be when they are missing, and look for them in familiar places. Staff ensure that young people benefit from interviews with an independent person on their return, although at times young people choose instead to speak to a staff member. The frequency of going missing incidents reduces over time for most young people, and staff understand why they go missing and amend their placement plans accordingly. For example, one young person wished to have increased contact with someone important to them, which staff organised to good effect, with the placing social worker's agreement.

Staff understand the risks that the internet may pose, and support young people to take age-appropriate risks. They have appropriate controls over internet use, and work with the local police to ensure that young people improve their knowledge and understanding of online safety.

Staff understand how to manage allegations and child-protection concerns. They

work effectively with placing social workers and the designated officer to ensure that allegations are responded to swiftly.

Managers recruit and vet staff safely to prevent unsuitable people having the opportunity to harm young people. Temporary staff who work in the home are subject to appropriate checks and induction to the home so that they too can care for young people safely.

	Judgement grade
<p>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</p>	<p>Requires improvement</p>
<p>The registered manager has not assessed risks appropriately when young people have joined the home. She has admitted a young person to the home whose needs are not within the range of needs included in the home’s registration or set out in the home’s statement of purpose. This led to the young person experiencing a very short placement in the home of less than two weeks. This does not promote young people’s security or welfare. The registered manager admitted another young person to the home without adequate risk assessment, which led to the placement being short-lived and to her causing harm to another young person. Managers understand the progress that young people make while living in the home. They take robust action when it is clear that staff are unable to meet young people’s needs. Staff support young people to move on when their placement ends prematurely, promoting the young person’s welfare as far as they are able to. The registered manager does not challenge the placing authority to ensure that young people benefit from appropriately planned transitions.</p> <p>Currently, the registered manager is taking a planned leave of absence from the home, and there is a temporary manager responsible for the day-to-day running of the home. He is suitably qualified and experienced, and has managed the home effectively. ‘He was due to hand back the reins of management to the registered manager the week following this inspection’. The temporary manager has prioritised the security of the existing group when he has admitted new young people to the home. He has planned the admission of young people to the home carefully, and has ensured that young people visit the home and are involved in the admissions process. As a result, these young people have settle into the home quickly, and staff develop positive relationships with them rapidly.</p> <p>Managers do not ensure that staff provide person-centred relational therapeutic care in line with the home’s statement of purpose . The temporary manager has identified this and, with the in-house therapist, plans to provide training for staff so that they can understand what underpins the therapeutic care they are striving to provide.</p>	

Staff provide high levels of consistency for young people. Staff are generally well trained and highly motivated to develop their learning. Three members of staff are enrolled on the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare. Staff receive regular formal and informal supervision, and report feeling well supported to undertake this challenging work.

Managers provide monitoring and review of the quality of care provided. They make use of the monthly independent visitor reports and their own monitoring to identify areas for improvement. Staff do not always maintain case records in a legible manner, which means records do not always make sense to young people, or anyone else. Staff notify Ofsted promptly so that the regulator can monitor patterns and trends 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 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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