

Children's home inspection – Full

Inspection date	29/11/2016
Unique reference number	1234317
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Care 4 Children Residential Services Ltd
Registered provider address	Care 4 Children, 1 Stuart Road, Bredbury Park Industrial Estate, Bredbury, Stockport, SK6 2SR

Responsible individual	Kamran Abassi
Registered manager	Asjad Mahmood
Inspector	Stella Henderson

Inspection date	29/11/2016
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	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	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

1234317

Summary of findings

The children's home provision requires improvement because:

- The home does not always operate in line with its statement of purpose. The document is inaccurate in parts and does not cover all the matters outlined in the relevant schedule.
- The manager has not always alerted the regulator to those incidents that require notification.
- Independent and internal monitoring systems are not robust enough to identify shortfalls in procedures and practice. The independent visitor's report does not reach Ofsted within recommended timescales.
- The home sometimes admits children without their relevant plans being in place. The manager does not escalate concerns about missing paperwork at a sufficiently early point to an individual of appropriate seniority within the placing authority.
- Incidents at the home are not always accurately or clearly recorded.
- Domestic waste has been combined in a skip with waste that has accumulated as a result of alterations to the property. This is a potential health and safety hazard.

The children's home strengths

- This full inspection was undertaken as a result of anonymous concerns raised about the home. No breaches of regulation related to the concerns were identified at this inspection.
- Children are beginning to settle into their new placements. They are engaging in the on-site education provided for them.
- Missing-from-home incidents have been managed well and have reduced. Good relationships with child sexual exploitation police have already been established. This contributes to children being safe at the home.
- Contact with family and those important to children is promoted and maintained, including for those who live some distance from their birth families.
- Staff members work hard to provide children with a wide range of purposeful activities and experiences, which children engage in and enjoy.

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
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in schedule 1. Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 16 (1)(5))	30/12/2016
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if any of the incidents listed within this section of the regulation occur. (Regulation 40 (3))	30/12/2016
<p>The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether –</p> <p>(a) children are effectively safeguarded</p> <p>(b) the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being.</p> <p>(Regulation 44 (4))</p>	30/12/2016

Recommendations

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

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9) Specifically, ensure staff put domestic waste in the refuse bins provided and not in the industrial skip situated in the garden. Additionally, ensure that the industrial waste is removed without delay.
- The registered person must challenge (under regulation 5 (c)) any placing

authority who asks them to accept a child in the absence of a complete and current relevant plan, as the expectation that a placement of a child without the necessary information would go ahead (in circumstances other than an emergency) is inadequate in relation to their role. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.5)

- The registered person and staff of the home cannot force a relevant person to engage or work productively with them and the regulation does not require this. The registered person should evidence what they have done to achieve engagement, including any actions taken to escalate concerns. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 11, paragraph 2.3) In particular, ensure that concerns are escalated by the registered manager or responsible individual at an early point, and to an individual of sufficient seniority within the local authority.
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. In particular, strengthen arrangements to monitor the quality and accuracy of 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

This is a private children's home. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. This is the home's first inspection.

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home	Requires improvement
<p>The overall experiences of children are affected by shortfalls that relate to the lack of care planning documentation which was not, in all cases, available at the beginning of their placement at the home.</p> <p>Staff have regularly requested care planning documentation from placing authorities several weeks after children were placed – but without success until the day of this inspection. However, concerns about the delay in providing this information have not been escalated quickly enough to those of sufficient seniority within the local authority. This limits the ability of the manager and staff to understand and properly plan to meet children’s needs, and to fully assess the impact of new arrivals to the home.</p> <p>Children attend the on-site school. Their academic achievement is actively promoted and, although they have been at the home for only a short period, they are beginning to make progress.</p> <p>Children also participate in activities outside of the school day, such as visiting a ski centre, going to the cinema, and shopping. A dog belonging to a member of staff is considered ‘part of the family’, and consideration is being given to adopting a cat. Keeping goats has been a less successful venture, but all of these elements enhance children’s day-to-day experiences and add to the quality of care that they receive.</p> <p>Children are at different stages of their engagement in the therapeutic programmes planned for them. One social worker noted that ‘progress is being made with X’. This is a promising start for children on the journey to improved emotional and psychological health.</p> <p>The quality of relationships between staff and children is generally good and is underpinned by clear therapeutic principles. This nurturing approach is beginning to have a positive impact on children. However, this can be a challenge for some children, whose early life experiences impact on their ability to trust adults. When difficult situations emerge as a result of this, staff respond appropriately but the recording of such incidents is sometimes inaccurate. This can give a misleading impression of what has occurred and how matters were dealt with.</p> <p>Through the support of staff, children maintain contact with family and friends. Children who live some distance from their family are not disadvantaged, because the home provides transport for contact arrangements. This helps important</p>	

attachments to be maintained.

Children are too young to be preparing for independent living, but they do take responsibility for small personal tasks. They are encouraged to respect the property, and any damage to the fabric of the home is quickly repaired. The home is comfortable and spacious, but the area in front of the school room has a waste disposal skip that has not been removed. This creates an eyesore and raises environmental health concerns as staff have been adding domestic waste to the skip.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Children are new to the home, but staff have a good understanding of the risks and their vulnerabilities. A very short period of missing-from-home incidents was very quickly brought under control, with staff following children to keep them in sight.</p> <p>Very effective partnership working has already been established with the local child sexual exploitation agencies, ensuring that the safety of these children is high on everyone's agenda. As a result, children are safer and their exposure to risk is closely monitored.</p> <p>Ofsted have not always been notified about incidents relating to child sexual exploitation. This is a procedural shortfall that has not had a negative impact on children. However, it prevents the regulator from taking swift action to safeguard children, should that be necessary.</p> <p>Children are protected by high staffing ratios. Their age and level of vulnerability means that children are closely supervised, both in and outside of the home and are rarely out of the company of adults.</p> <p>Children and staff generally get on well together. In these early days of placement, the children at the home are getting to know each other and form a friendship group. They have their minor disagreements but there is no bullying at the home.</p> <p>Children exhibit a range of very challenging behaviours, often related to their early life experiences. The support of in-house psychologists to individual children and to staff provides a valuable contribution to both the understanding and management of behaviour.</p> <p>As a result, staff are able to use a range of interventions to de-escalate behaviours,</p>	

and help children to better manage their emotional responses to situations and events. Sanctions are minimal and there has been no use of physical restraint since the home opened.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
<p>The registered manager has been in post since it opened in 2016. He holds suitable childcare and management qualifications.</p> <p>The home is not operated consistently in line with its statement of purpose and there are some significant inaccuracies. This makes it difficult for the home to be fully held to account and for the manager to measure performance against the contents of that document.</p> <p>For example, information about the number of school places available at the on-site school, and the name of the responsible individual, are incorrect. Where impact assessments have been completed, these are not fully evaluated although the home's statement of purpose indicates that they will be.</p> <p>The document says that there are electronic gates in place, when none are fitted, and it refers to the 'Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service', when the home is not in that geographical area. Monitoring by the manager and the independent visitor has not been thorough enough to pick up on these shortfalls and others referred to in this report.</p> <p>Although implicit in the independent visitor's report, the visitor has not clearly stated whether children are safeguarded and their welfare is promoted. The visitor's reports are not always sent to Ofsted in a timely manner. This may delay the regulator from raising matters of concern with the provider, should this be necessary.</p> <p>The staff team is well supported through team meetings, supervision and consultation with in-house psychologists. This helps it to provide the day-to-day and specialised support that children require.</p> <p>Partnership working has got off to a good start, with key professionals making a valuable contribution to help the home safeguard and support children. The manager has also started to attend local provider forum meetings. This will further enhance local safeguarding knowledge as well as providing an important avenue of support.</p>	

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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