

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	05/12/2016
Unique reference number	SC477724
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Crystal Care Solutions Limited, Company Number 05952454
Registered provider address	Bank House, Market Square, Congleton, Cheshire CW12 1ET

Responsible individual	James O'Leary
Registered manager	Steven Fellows
Inspector	Mark Kersh

Inspection date	05/12/2016
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

SC477724

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people are making progress over a range of developmental areas. Collaborative work between staff at the home, therapists and education is having a valuable impact on improving young people's lives and self-care skills.
- Young people form trusting relationships with staff and have built positive attachments. They develop the confidence to begin talking about issues which are sensitive to them.
- The staff team helps young people to reflect on their circumstances and to work through their difficulties constructively.
- Staff support young people to access education. Young people's attendance and engagement is excellent. Staff have high aspirations for young people.
- The experiences of young people are considerably enhanced by the variety of activities and opportunities made available to them.
- Young people receive specialist therapeutic services to meet their individual needs. Staff work alongside professional therapists to ensure that young people are fully supported around emotional issues, particularly regarding attachment and trauma.
- There is a strong theoretical basis to the work being undertaken in the home, with the management team and staff embracing their training in 'working attachment' and linking this to the 'Good Lives Model'. This underpins all work carried out with young people.
- The management team and staff provide very good-quality, child-centred, nurturing care, supported by clear behavioural boundaries. Young people understand that certain behaviours are unacceptable.
- Staff are now providing a safer level of care and are becoming better equipped to manage and respond to the young people's needs and presenting behaviours.
- The registered manager and deputy are committed to improve practice in the home to further enhance the experiences of the young people. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the home and have identified several areas for further 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(s) meet/s 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>35: Behaviour management policies and records</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that:</p> <p>Within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so; has spoken to the user about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3) (b) (i))</p>	<p>31/01/2017</p>

Recommendations

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

- Ensure a record of supervision is kept for staff, including the manager. The record should provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with regulation. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)

Full report

Information about this children's home

- The home is registered to accommodate three young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.
- The home is one of a number of homes operated by a private organisation.
- The home specialises in providing a therapeutic service for young people as written in the home's statement of purpose document.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
23/06/2015	Full	Good
14/01/2015	Interim	Not judged
22/10/2014	Interim	Not judged

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>Good</p>
<p>Young people are able to settle in the home, engage in education, make progress, and significantly reduce self-defeating and risk-taking behaviours. This is because the staff, through their actions, provide young people with a warm and homely family environment. Trusting and respectful mutual relationships develop as a result.</p> <p>Young people have positive relationships with staff. They are reassured and feel safe with them. Staff are able to influence young people to change historical behaviours and to learn a wide range of new skills. There is a strong focus on wraparound care, where therapy and a sensitive approach to caring benefit the young people well. Young people are extremely positive about the care they receive in the home and collectively confirm that they have no issues around or complaints about the care provided. Individual comments from young people include.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 'My home is nice. And the staff really look after me well, and they are very helpful.' ■ 'It's good here. I like everybody, staff and kids, and I get to do lots of fun things.' ■ 'I really like it a lot. Food is good. I go out and staff really look after me well.' <p>Young people have a sense of belonging and have developed a sense of security within a stable environment. They are confident; they are able to talk more about their worries and concerns; and they gradually begin to address the impact of their past negative experiences. Young people engage well with the individual therapists provided by the organisation. Feedback and advice provided by therapists is used to update plans and risk management strategies for caring for the young people. This holistic approach further enhances the consistency that young people experience.</p> <p>Staff demonstrate a proactive response to the young people's physical and emotional health needs. They recognise and address the young people's physical health conditions, and support them to attend all of the relevant health appointments; as a result, young people's health is maintained. Specialist services support young people's emotional health needs. Qualified and registered therapists provide in-house therapeutic support, and the young people benefit</p>	

from this provision for as long as necessary. Staff work with each young person to strengthen their emotional resilience, increase their self-confidence and enable them to withstand any setbacks in the future. A therapist says:

- 'I am very proud to be associated with this home, over the last twelve months the home has really improved, and I feel young people are benefiting from staff support and input.'

The young people are dedicated and fully engaged in education. There are effective links with schools. This ensures that the young people benefit from the daily communication between the school staff and the home staff, which allows consistency in young people's care. One young person has made a very positive transition to a work experience placement. Young people are supported by teaching assistants who are available during class time if the young people face any difficulties. All young people are making progress in their education. Two young people have been recognised at an awards evening for their 100% attendance and are proud of the medals received for this achievement.

Staff provide a variety of activities for the young people to engage with inside and outside of the home. Young people have completed a bike ride and raised money for a charity. They have trips out to historical sites and are pursuing their own preferred interests and hobbies. By taking advantage of opportunities to try new things, going to new places and developing new talents, young people gain a sense of achievement that enables them to be proud and enjoy their experiences.

Young people are supported by staff to embrace the 'Good Lives Model'. They do this by having fun through leisure activities, hobbies and play activities. Young people have a clear life goal, and work towards what they want to be or achieve. This provides them with a purpose and allows them to make a difference by being helpful, generous and respectful of others. Their sexual health is considered and this provides them with a positive sexual identity. Weekly cultural evenings widen the view that young people have of the world. In addition to tasting food from different cultures, young people gain insights into how others live.

The staff communicate effectively with the young people in a variety of ways. Good examples include therapeutic stories that enable young people to understand their own feelings and emotions, and allow them to settle at bedtime. Key worker sessions explore risk management and acceptable behaviour, and how certain behaviours can negatively impact on others. Young people's meetings, a suggestions book and a grumbles book encourage young people to contribute ideas on the running of the home. Young people confirm their views, which are listened to and acted upon by staff in the home.

Contact arrangements between young people and their families are very well

supported. The staff coordinate very closely with placing authorities and manage young people's contact arrangements with care and vigilance. Positive feedback has been received through the home's systems for consultation with other professionals. One young person's social worker has written in a questionnaire:

- 'Very informative and I am always kept updated. The young person is always happy in the home. I believe the young person's needs are being catered for and this is evident through discussions with other professionals, through his advocate and through meetings that are being held in respect of the young person's progress and provisions.'

And one young person's social worker says:

- 'My young person is really settled in the home and doing well. Staff have facilitated family contact extremely well, which benefits the young person and his family.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Young people's safety and protection are effectively considered on a daily basis by the staff team. Young people confirmed that they feel safe in their home and with the staff that look after them. The registered manager and deputy manager provide good day-to-day direction and support to the staff team to ensure that care practice and routines are matched to the changing risks and needs of each young person. Staff are well informed, follow clear risk management strategies and work effectively in partnership with the external therapists.</p> <p>The areas of risk and vulnerability for individual young people are carefully considered through in-depth information-gathering and assessment before they move into the home. Therapists are fully engaged in this process, which contributes to the confidence the management team has in being able to match young people with each other knowing their needs can be met. This helps staff to be prepared and alert to young people's immediate safeguarding needs. Well-coordinated risk assessments are developed and updated throughout the young people's time in the home. Staff are alerted following young people's weekly therapy sessions to possible and changing risks as these arise.</p> <p>The home provides a safe environment for young people who have experienced unpredictable and unsafe situations in their past. Through close supervision from caring staff, each young person develops a sense of safety and trust in the staff</p>	

who care for them. Staff receive up-to-date safeguarding training that includes training around child sexual exploitation and online safety. Staff demonstrate their competences in their understanding of safeguarding and their knowledge of safeguarding procedures.

The advantages and potential hazards of the home's location are well understood by the management team and staff through a detailed and well-presented locality risk assessment. This helps the staff to plan and manage activities away from the home in a way that reduces risks and increases the benefits to young people, ensuring that they and the community are safe.

Young people have not run away or gone missing from the home for some considerable time. Staff are vigilant to the signs and symptoms of risk, and are well informed, which enables them to engage with young people in meaningful discussions. Young people can identify risk. They are very aware of and fully understand their own individual risk management programme.

The home uses an individual community opportunities programme and experience (ICOPE). This is an individually tailored incremental risk assessed programme based on opportunities, continuous assessment, analyses, review and evaluation. An ICOPE is carefully planned between young people, therapists and the staff, and has to be agreed and signed off by the young people's social workers. As a result, young people are increasingly safer in the home and when out in the local community. Young people say that they are safe and feel safe, and that there are no safeguarding concerns. They report that bullying or intimidation does not take place and that everyone gets on well and respects each other in the home.

Clear behaviour management plans are in place which identify the potential triggers for negative or inappropriate behaviour and give guidance to staff on how to manage young people's behaviour effectively. Incidents of restraint are low and when intervention has occurred this has been short in duration. Restraint records are in place, showing debriefs taking place with the young people after every incident requiring physical intervention. However, the records for restraint do not show debriefs for staff. As a result, a requirement is made. This is to ensure that staff have an opportunity to discuss how young people's behaviour may affect their own emotions and behaviour, and the support that the organisation provides to staff

Safe and effective recruitment procedures are followed when appointing new members of staff to the home. A range of pre-employment checks are undertaken, all of which are verified by the registered manager. Interview questions are used to scrutinise potential applicants and their motivation for working with young people, and their knowledge of safeguarding matters. This approach minimises the potential for inappropriate adults to be employed in the home.

The home provides young people with appropriate levels of physical safety and

security. This is achieved through established risk assessment processes that are overseen by the management team. In addition, regular health and safety checks are made of the electrical and gas appliances in the home. Fire drills and evacuations are practised regularly with young people, and visitors who sign in are briefed on the fire evacuation procedure and assembly point. The home's fire systems and equipment is checked and serviced at required intervals. These measures protect young people, staff and visitors.

	Judgement grade
<p>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</p>	<p>Good</p>
<p>The home's manager was registered with Ofsted in August 2016. He is an experienced practitioner, and has managed other children's homes prior to taking up his post in this home. He brings his broad experience to the role, which includes many years of employment in residential childcare. The registered manager has completed the level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare. He is supported by an enthusiastic deputy manager and together they now have a more accurate understanding of the strengths of the home and areas for improvement.</p> <p>The registered manager, who joined the home in January 2016, and the deputy manager, who joined the home in February 2016, are making progress towards completing delegated tasks effectively and embedding new systems into practice.</p> <p>There is a stable and committed staff team at the home, and most are qualified to undertake the roles to which they are assigned. Since the interim inspection in February 2016, professional relationships within the team have improved, and there is now a more collaborative style of working. Staff are positive about the support they receive and the training they have completed, specifically covering the young people's needs around attachment and trauma. This has been provided to them by the professional therapists who work weekly with each young person.</p> <p>Staff report that they receive regular supervision and performance-related reviews. However, some records of staff supervision were not completed or signed, and were not within staff personal development files. As a result, a recommendation is made. This is to ensure that the record should provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with regulation.</p> <p>Young people have access to a range of information about how the home operates, which helps them to become familiar with what to expect from the service. In addition, the home's operation, aims and objectives are set out in a statement of purpose document, which is available to partner agencies and families. The</p>	

children's guide has taken young people's views into consideration and is set out and designed using their own preferred comic characters.

Young people's case files and associated plans are well maintained. They clearly record the individual needs of the young people, and the plans for ensuring that these needs are met. 'Records give an insight into the progress that young people make towards meeting their goals and targets. This progress is encouraged through individual incentive and rewards schemes, which receive a positive/good response from young people.'

Internal and external monitoring of the home is undertaken. The independent person completes monthly visits and submits timely reports that reflect the views of the young people and their progress. This type of monitoring has been effective in highlighting the positives and the areas that need improvement in the home. The management team uses this information effectively, along with their own monthly audits, to construct a comprehensive development plan.

The management team works proactively and positively with others, inside and outside of the organisation. They challenge other professionals when necessary and work with them to resolve any difference of professional opinion. This means that the needs of each young person are identified, agreed and met.

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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