

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	05/01/2017
Unique reference number	SC481295
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	iMap Centre Limited
Registered provider address	iMap School, Barrowmore Estate, Barnhouse Lane, Great Barrow, CHESTER CH3 7JA

Responsible individual	Martin McKevitt
Registered manager	Stephen Wilkinson
Inspector	Nicola Thomas

Inspection date	05/01/2017
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

SC481295

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people receive care from a consistent and nurturing staffing team and this has resulted in the group building close and trusted relationships.
- Staff provide sensitively tailored support to enable young people to communicate their views and positively influence the service they receive.
- Staff at the home help young people to develop core skills in order to become more independent and lead fulfilling lives.
- Young people have made significant progress in engaging with education and attaining within their educational setting.
- Healthcare planning is strong, medication arrangements are robust and staff work collaboratively with other healthcare services to meet the complex health needs of young people.
- Young people access a variety of activities both inside and outside of the home, and as a result have developed social skills and a greater sense of belonging.
- Safeguarding arrangements are robust, although meticulous risk assessment and supporting planning has meant that staff at the home have not needed to utilise them.
- Positive behaviour is heavily encouraged and physical interventions are rare, having reduced significantly.
- The management team is working together to develop and improve evaluation and monitoring systems in the home.
- Placing authorities and families are consistently happy with the service provided.

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>The registered person must maintain records ('case records') for each child which—</p> <p>(a) include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child. (Regulation 36 (1))</p>	01/03/2017
<p>The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month.</p> <p>(2) When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—</p> <p>(a) if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (2))</p>	01/03/2017
<p>In order to complete a quality of care review, the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p> <p>2 (a) the quality of care provided for children;</p> <p>(b) the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and</p> <p>(c) any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.</p> <p>(5) The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (2) and (5))</p>	01/03/2017

Full report

Information about this children's home

- This home is registered to provide care and support for up to five young people who may have a learning disability.
- The home is part of a private organisation. The organisation also has specialist educational provision which is accessed by many of the young people living at this home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/09/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
15/03/2016	Full	Good
04/11/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/01/2015	Full	Good

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 at this home are making consistently good progress in all aspects of their development. The staff are providing a very nurturing environment and interactions are characterised with genuine emotional warmth. This has resulted in very close and strong bonds with a stable staffing team. The physical environment of the home is comfortable and spacious. It is well equipped with toys, activities and resources that are tailored to each young person’s level of cognitive functioning and sensory preferences.</p> <p>Staff at the home are instrumental in ensuring young people feel secure by adopting age and ability appropriate routines. Young people eat together and enjoy bedtime stories. They play with staff and each other, and are helped to relax through watching films, baking or sensory stimulation depending on their preferences. All young people have made progress in establishing self-care routines. One young person refused to bathe or get dressed initially; he now enjoys bathing, gets himself dressed and even puts his own clothes away after washing.</p> <p>Young people are involved in making decisions about their care, despite communicative challenges. Staff use creative methods of consultation such as photographs or objects to establish preferences. The home has a children’s guide and a complaints procedure which all young people have been supported to understand. Formal advocacy services have been made available recently to one young person who declined to engage. Offering these services as an option is always considered important, and staff will engage this process if appropriate.</p> <p>Staff at the home take children’s rights seriously. They have recently initiated discussion and formal processes with the placing authority to make decisions regarding restrictive practices that they considered necessary to keep one young person safe. They succeeded in achieving an appropriate balance of respecting the young person’s rights while ensuring his safety and wellbeing.</p> <p>Young people at the home have significant and complex health needs. Staff prioritise those needs and have developed excellent links with appropriate healthcare professionals. One young person has made excellent progress in ceasing the use of continence wear and developing independence in this area. Medication arrangements are robust and staff at the home have had additional training to support specific health needs of young people. One healthcare professional stated, ‘The staff engage really well and always contact me if there is a change in the healthcare needs of the children. They liaise with myself and I can signpost to other services if needed. I have been encouraged to visit and made to feel</p>	

welcome. They are very proactive.' Staff are currently working with young people to establish a healthy diet and active lifestyle. They sought advice from the local nurse regarding diet and nutrition.

All young people have made progress in reducing aggressive and challenging behaviour which has resulted in more enriched relationships with their peers in the home and the wider community. One young person could not eat at a table with others; his social worker reports that he is now able to go out to restaurants with others and enjoy a meal. All young people are being assisted to enhance their skills and promote their independence. Young people are taught to plan a meal, buy the ingredients and then cook and clean up afterwards. They shop at the local supermarket with varying degrees of independence which is balanced with an assessment of risk. One young person is experiencing transition to another setting for adults. Staff are sensitively and carefully managing this plan with a view to reducing his anxiety as much as possible.

The staff at the home offer a wide variety of activities for young people both inside and outside the home. Recent trips include the bowling alley, local parks, the cinema, shopping centres, restaurants and coffee shops. One staff member has art qualifications and there is evidence of art projects being undertaken by young people on the walls of the home, demonstrating that the home assists young people to explore talents and interests. There are plans to introduce an ongoing gardening activity soon. Young people have recently rescued a poorly hedgehog. On the advice of the local rescue centre they built it a home, and after receiving treatment at the centre the animal was able to live in the new habitat before shortly being released back into the wild. This has helped to give young people a sense of taking responsibility in caring for an animal. One social worker remarked upon how a young person had progressed in their ability to access community resources. An independent reviewing officer echoed this view stating, 'The home provides a clear focus on minimising the limits imposed on this young person due to his disability. He is supported appropriately to take part in mainstream activities.'

The setting benefits from the use of a specialist in-house team trained in therapeutic behaviour management techniques. This is utilised alongside Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to help young people to resolve their own internal conflicts and behaviour patterns, and assist staff in supporting them to do so. One young person was recently very anxious as a result of questioning his own sexuality. He had previously refused to engage with any mental health services. Staff worked with him to encourage him to attend the local CAMHS service where he received advice and guidance to assist him to resolve his anxiety. Staff have agreed strategies to help minimise his distress and guide the young person to his keyworker or the manager when these feelings manifest. This young person now contacts the CAMHS service of his own volition as he feels comfortable to do so. This has helped him to make sense of his own identity and increase his feelings of self-worth.

Staff at the home have sought speech and language therapy where necessary and staff work with professionals to encourage young people to verbalise feelings and wishes wherever possible. All young people have made progress in engaging in educational activities at their specialist settings. One young person was going to school one day per week and often would not engage at all, refusing to enter the building. He now attends four days weekly and is engaging well with staff and peers. Other young people have completed formal accreditation programmes evidencing a variety of life skills, such as digital citizenship and communication skills as well as basic mathematics and other traditional education goals.

The staff work very well with parents and carers and promote contact in line with the local authority plan. They have received good feedback about the service they offer. One parent speaking about her son said, 'I am amazed at how much his confidence has grown and how relaxed and happy he is... He is a very different young man and this has only been achieved through the support and dedication of the team at the home.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Young people report that they feel safe at this home. Their social workers and other professionals agree that safety needs are a priority. All young people benefit from one to one staffing ratios and have detailed assessments of risk and support needs that are well communicated and implemented in practice by all staff. There has been no police involvement at the home for some time. Leaders engage with the local community officer to ensure that they understand the needs of young people living here and to promote their effectiveness in the event of an incident requiring police involvement or a young person going missing. One young person would regularly contact the police when he first came to live at the home. Staff worked with local officers to help them understand his behaviour and the reason for him requesting police involvement. This behaviour has ceased.</p> <p>Since the last inspection, there has been only one incident requiring physical intervention. The method used was justified in the circumstances and the least restrictive. The incident was reviewed and debriefed by the manager. Staff at the home are trained to promote positive behaviour and recognise the signs of young people's anxiety escalating which can result in challenging behaviour. One young person who would regularly damage property in the home in frustration has significantly reduced this behaviour and has only had one incident in the past 12 months. There are very detailed support plans which provide a multitude of strategies to reduce anxiety and prevent any escalation. The plans are tailored to each young person's preferences and needs. The staffing team is stable and consistent and staff know how to respond to young people positively which contributes to a very calm, warm and friendly environment. An independent reviewing officer said that 'appropriate knowledge helps staff notice if something is troubling this young person and there are strategies to minimise difficulties that may be caused by them.' Young people also evidently enjoy good relationships with each other.</p> <p>Young people at the home are encouraged to use the internet safely. One young person approached a member of staff with worries about accessing inappropriate content on the internet. The staff member gave sound advice and was very reassuring, demonstrating a good knowledge of internet safety. Staff have accessed training about the services offered by the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP).</p> <p>The organisation's recruitment procedures are robust. The registered manager recently refreshed his knowledge on a safer recruitment training course and uses this information well when recruiting staff. Staff are well trained in safeguarding procedures. They understand the importance of whistleblowing and know how to report any concerns or suspicions of harm. The physical environment in the home</p>	

is risk assessed regularly and any hazards or health and safety requirements are mitigated and met. The manager completes weekly checks. This is especially important in this setting as some young people have a very limited awareness of danger.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>The registered manager is suitably qualified and has had 16 years of experience in this role with other companies. The deputy manager is a former head of care services and is also qualified to NVQ level four status. They work well together to ensure that the staff are provided with a good level of support and that care planning for young people is comprehensive and effective.</p> <p>Staff report they are happy and well supported, and this contributes to a positive atmosphere within the home. Leaders and staff have accessed a varied programme of training which is tailored to the needs of young people, such as epilepsy and administering rescue medication, autism spectrum disorder and Asperger syndrome and alternative communication methods, for example. Staff have all achieved or are working towards NVQ level three qualifications.</p> <p>Internal record keeping practices are generally meticulous and leaders routinely demonstrate a good level of oversight and scrutiny. One young person’s placing authority had not supplied key documentation relating to care plans or the review of the plan, and managers could not demonstrate sufficient rigour in pursuing this information. The home have their own detailed placement plan in place which does reflect the placing authority’s agreed care objectives, and therefore this has had no impact on the quality of care delivered to the young person. A requirement is made to address this matter.</p> <p>The home is well resourced and there are contingencies in place for unplanned absence. In the event of a waking night staff absence, the manager will ask other waking night staff to cover the shift. If this is not viable then the daytime staffing team is invited to sleep-in and there is room downstairs with a sofa bed which is utilised. This is not an ideal set-up but it is used only scarcely as a contingency plan. The manager is in discussion with senior leaders with regards to consideration of extending the building or altering the use of other parts of the home. This could offer additional flexibility in the future for sleep-in staff to support waking night staff, dependent upon the needs of young people.</p> <p>Leaders have ensured that the home has maintained good relationships with neighbours. They are forging strong links in the community which include using local shops and amenities and accessing work experience opportunities in mechanics and bicycle repair for young people. The manager knows a local café owner and is in discussion at present to establish whether young people may be able to experience this work in a safe and planned manner.</p> <p>The statement of purpose for the home has recently been revised and reflects the organisation’s aims and objectives. The managers have produced a new format for</p>	

monitoring and recording the progress and achievements of young people. Contact with external parties needs to be established to inform this quality review as there is little feedback gathered from placing authorities or other stakeholders on a regular basis. The regulation 44 reports also need to build on this area and meaningfully engage young people in this process. Requirements are made to address these shortfalls.

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 whom 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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