

1232658

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned by a private organisation and can accommodate up to five young people who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 4 to 5 May 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: Not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because

- Young people are very settled and are making good progress from their initial starting points.
- Managers and staff have highly effective working relationships with parents, placing authorities and other professionals. Social workers report high levels of

satisfaction with the care provided.

- Young people benefit from extremely trusting and secure relationships with the staff.
- Young people are making good educational progress and are well supported to participate and attend school.
- Young people's views and opinions are central to the home. They are fully involved in decisions about their day-to-day lives and their care plans.
- The new manager provides strong leadership and direction to the staff team.
- Effective safeguarding procedures help to keep young people safe.
- Staff demonstrate a good understanding of young people's needs and work hard to address these.

The children's home's areas for development

- Basic health plans are in place, but the plans do not clearly identify how relevant health concerns are being addressed.
- Young people's views are not consistently recorded in the consequences records.
- The risk assessments do not provide staff with clear strategies in terms of monitoring a young person's welfare should they return home under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- The manager is often on shift in the home due to gaps in the rota and the inexperience of the staff team.
- The training matrix has not been updated to reflect recent training undertaken and some staff have not completed their first aid training.

Recent inspection history

This is the home's first full inspection since registration in October 2016.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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
Ensure the provider employs individuals to work at the children's home who have the appropriate experience, qualifications and skills for their work. (Regulation 32(3)(b))	09/06/2017

Recommendations

- The registered person must challenge (under regulation five) any placing authority who asks them to accept a child in the absence of a complete and current relevant plan. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.5)
- Ensure that, in line with their individual health care plans and the ethos of the home, children and young people are offered advice, support and guidance on their health and well-being, including smoking and sexual identity. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.18)
- Ensure staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are concerns for a child, their placement plan and risk assessments, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. This specifically relates to clearer risk management strategies in relation to monitoring young people believed to be under the influence of alcohol or harmful substances. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph, 9.5)
- Any sanctions used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. Specifically that the sanction records demonstrate that the child has been spoken to about the measure imposed. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)

- Any registered manager placed in charge of a children's home or staff member in a deputy or supervisory role such as 'shift leader' should have substantial relevant experience of working in a children's home and have successfully completed their induction for the home in which they are employed. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.21)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people are thriving in a stable and supportive environment. The home provides a warm, nurturing and structured environment. Consequently, young people are making good progress from their initial starting points. A social worker commented, 'Prior to moving to [home] she was placing herself in difficult and dangerous situations... there has been a substantial change since moving to [home]... she has come on leaps and bounds... I'm very impressed.'

Most of the young people have a history of non-attendance in their education. Excellent progress has been made with this. All the young people are engaged in some form of education. The manager and staff have established strong links with education providers and the local authority virtual heads. A social worker said, '[X] had been out of education for two years and the staff have been proactive with education and the virtual head.' Another social worker commented, '[X] wasn't in school and [name of the manager] worked closely with our virtual head to support her to attend.'

Young people's emotional and psychological well-being is well promoted and this was confirmed by placing social workers. They receive support from the child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) and specialist counselling. Consequently, young people's self-harming and challenging behaviours are reducing in frequency and intensity. Staff demonstrate a great deal of empathy towards the young people and actively support them to talk about their thoughts and feelings. Some young people have a 'feelings box' in their bedrooms and they are encouraged to write down their worries and concerns and place them in the box. This enables them to talk to the staff about the things that may be troubling them. One key worker described how their key child 'got some relief from writing things down'. As a result, young people are starting to make sense of their difficulties, and are becoming more emotionally resilient.

Overall, young people are in good health and enjoy mostly healthy lifestyles. There is some evidence of key-working sessions taking place to discuss concerns relating to smoking and sexual health. Basic health plans are in place, but the plans do not clearly identify how these specific health issues are being addressed.

The quality of relationships between young people and staff is very good. Young people enjoy spending one-to-one time with their key workers away from the home. Individual routines include staff reading to particular young people at bedtimes. Regular key-work sessions and 'get together' meetings provide young people with the opportunity to discuss the running of the home and how they are being cared for. One young person

commented, 'They [staff] understand me and give me lots of support.' The young people recognise that staff care about them and they feel valued and respected.

Young people engage in a wide range of age-appropriate activities. Examples include the cinema, meals out, trips to a funfair and a day out at a safari park. Two young people recently took part in a charity event to raise funds for Comic Relief. They have fun mixing with each other, as well as spending time with friends from school. Staff also support young people to try new experiences. For example, one young person is currently experimenting with being a vegan. This helps to build their self-esteem and strengthens their sense of belonging.

Young people have appropriate contact with their families and those people who are important to them. Contact arrangements promote their welfare and safety, and staff work closely with professionals to ensure contact is a positive experience for young people. This supports them to maintain a sense of identity.

The home is well maintained and decorated. It provides a comfortable and homely environment. The home is well resourced with books, games and a computer. Young people are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms to their own tastes and the large grounds enable them to ride their bikes or play on the trampoline. A social worker commented that this is the most settled that their placed young person has been.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Staff work hard to provide a safe and supportive home. Consequently, young people develop a strong sense of safety and well-being. Young people confirm that the adults listen to them and take their concerns seriously. Staff are aware of the risks associated with young people, such as self-harm, going missing and sexual exploitation. The manager recently sourced self-harm training for all the staff; this ensures they are knowledgeable about the subject.

There have been no incidents of young people going missing from the home. Should an incident occur, then staff understand the missing-from-home procedures, ensuring that young people return to the home safe and well. The manager attends provider meetings with the local police and other agencies; this gives an overview of the current risks in the local area. The meetings also enable agencies to share intelligence that can be used to safeguard the young people.

Behaviour is managed well by the staff. Observations of an incident where a young person lost control during the inspection provided evidence that the staff are effective at de-escalating and calming challenging situations. The records demonstrate that physical interventions are kept to a minimum. Staff use consequences to enable young people to learn from their negative behaviour. However, in a number of the records the young people's views are not consistently recorded. A placing social worker commented, 'Residential care has been appropriate for her... she's responded to the boundaries and her outburst are not as frequent... she's doing really well.'

Individual risk assessments are in place and are regularly reviewed. However, these are not sufficiently robust. For example, one young person has a significant history of cannabis and alcohol misuse. They have made notable progress with this since moving to the home. However, there was one occasion when they returned home under the influence of cannabis. The risk assessments do not provide staff with clear strategies in terms of monitoring the young person's welfare should they return home under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager left her post in April 2017. A new manager is in post and awaiting registration with Ofsted. She is very experienced and suitably qualified. She provides strong leadership and direction to the staff team. However, the manager is often on shift in the home due to gaps in the rota and the inexperience of the staff team. Prior to coming to work at the home most of the staff did not have previous experience of working in residential care; this includes those in senior posts.

Staff enjoy working in the home and describe the manager as approachable and supportive. Staff receive regular supervision, both formally and informally, which supports them in their practice. There are regular team meetings and children's meetings. The children's meetings enable the staff team and key workers to reflect on the young people's targets and progress. This ensures the staff team works collaboratively to provide consistency and stability for young people.

There is a comprehensive induction and training programme which is completed by individual staff. This ensures the staff have the skills to care for the young people well. However, the training matrix has not been updated to reflect recent training undertaken and some staff have not completed their first aid training. Individual staff either hold the appropriate level 3 childcare qualification or are currently undertaking this.

The home delivers the care and support that is outlined in the statement of purpose. The manager has developed effective working relationships with parents, carers and professionals to secure positive outcomes for the young people. A placing social worker commented, 'They are not prepared to give up on her. They have stuck with her and I can't thank them enough. They go above and beyond.' Professionals confirm that communication between them and the home is good.

External monitoring of the home takes place monthly and the reports from these visits are forwarded to Ofsted. The manager has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. She regularly monitors the progress of young people and can clearly demonstrate the positive impact that living in the home has had on young people's progress and life chances.

It is evident that the young people are central to the home and internal placement plans outline young people's needs. However, key information, such as local authority care

plans, is not on young people's files. The manager has been proactive in chasing these documents up and currently this is not impacting negatively on the quality of care the young people are receiving.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1232658

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes Ltd

Registered provider address: Mountfields House, Epinal Way, Loughborough LE11 3GE

Responsible individual: Benjamin Jordan

Registered manager: Emma Shea

Inspector(s)

Michelle Bacon: social care regulatory inspector

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