

# 1223681

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for up to four children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. Therapeutic services are part of this home's statement of purpose. The home forms part of a private organisation.

**Inspection dates:** 8 to 9 May 2017

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account**                      **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected                      good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers                      good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 8 November 2016

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Requires improvement

**Enforcement action since last inspection**

None

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because

- Young people grow in self-esteem and have greater emotional resilience as staff stand by them. Staff continue to work with significant challenging behaviours

when others have given up.

- Safeguarding and partnership working are strong, robust and make a significant contribution to keeping young people safe and investigating their concerns.
- Young people experience consistent care as leaders and managers commit to maintaining high levels of staffing to keep young people safe.
- Staff remain resilient and committed due to effective managerial support, training and an exceptional child-centred approach to their work.
- Complaints are extremely well managed and appropriate action is taken, including immediate referral to the local safeguarding officer. Leaders and managers are robust in their response where young people's concerns are upheld, and staff disciplinary action is taken.

The children's home's areas for development

- Consider offering new staff fortnightly supervision. In a home that is offering a therapeutic service, it's important that staff have the opportunity to reflect on challenging situations.
- Find opportunities for young people to become more involved in their community, for example by supporting a local charity event or community gala day.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/11/2016	Full	Requires improvement

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Young people make progress across all aspects of their lives and from their starting points. Strong boundaries and robust safeguarding are not always acceptable to young people living at this home and they challenge staff on their decision-making. Relationships between staff and young people are observed to be extremely respectful. One young person said this was 'the best care home I have lived in'; another reported she felt 'much happier than I did at home.'

The care planning framework is effective and comprehensive, and places safety and emotional welfare at the forefront of young people's support packages. There is excellent connectivity between care planning, risk assessment and placing authority planning. Accountable recording shows staff have a good understanding of young people's needs and the consistent implementation of strategies to keep them safe. While young people may sometimes resent the structure and boundaries in the home, they fully acknowledge that their missing-from-home behaviour is reducing.

Young people are treated with a high level of respect. Staff value and respect the backgrounds and experiences of young people. Good staff understanding of the impact of early childhood trauma enables staff to explore and sensitively respond to extremely challenging behaviours.

Young people re-engage with education as a result of the supervision, support and encouragement they receive from staff. Young people with little previous attendance at school now attend and do well in school. One social care professional said, 'Staff appear to be supportive and were proactive in addressing her educational needs when she was excluded from her previous school placement.' They are encouraged to express their artistic flair as well as doing well in core academic subjects such as maths and english. Young people now look forward to extending their education and individuals express a keen interest in areas such as creative writing, photography and qualifying as a beautician.

Young people benefit from safe contact with family members. Staff work hard to embrace and maintain positive relationships with family members. This approach helps young people with attachment difficulties to maintain relationships within their family groups.

Staff's high regard for the mental and emotional health of young people is reflected in face-to-face work with young people and their sensitive and determined responses to the challenging behaviours presented by young people. One social worker commented, (name) has told me on many occasions that she is happy at this placement. She says that she has a good relationship with staff and finds them easy to talk too. There is also

a therapist that visits once a week, which gives (name) even more opportunity to talk through her feelings.'

Staff liaise well with agencies, such as child and adolescent mental health services, to support young people with their mental health. Young people are keen to engage with the provision's therapist, when she meets them weekly in the home or out on an activity. Young people benefit further from therapeutic input as staff maintain positive connections with the home's therapist in order to develop the knowledge that is required to support young people with some very complex and extreme behaviours.

Staff provide structured and supportive programmes that enable young people to develop independence skills and knowledge. They receive good advice about healthy eating and giving up smoking. Young people appreciate the good-quality accommodation that they live in, having invested their own time in choosing decor and furnishings for the home.

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

Safety procedures and staff practice are robust. Safeguarding protocols, inter-agency liaison and staff practice are all rigorous and respond effectively to the risks and vulnerabilities of young people. Individual risk management plans are clear about going missing and other risks, such as self-injurious behaviours, substance misuse and use of the internet.

Effective partnership working between staff, police, missing-from-care coordinators and both the local and the placing authority child sexual exploitation teams promotes a robust safeguarding response. One social worker said, 'The staff and manager have acted appropriately to ensure that (name) is kept safe and reports have been made to the police when needed. They are trying different strategies to prevent further incidents and is clear that they are striving to ensure (name) placement with them is a success.' Young people are safer because of robust and rigorous missing-from-care procedures. Staff will follow young people when they leave the home without permission to prevent them from making poor associations.

Behaviour management plans are detailed and place the young person at the centre of staff practice. Attention to detail is excellent and strategies connect across all aspects of young people's lives, including education arrangements, use of mobile phones and internet and accessing the local and wider community.

Behaviour management training is extensive and all staff working in and joining the core staff team are trained effectively. Behaviour management strategies are clearly set out, with a clear focus on de-escalation techniques. Staff are aware of triggers and the need for consistent messaging to young people.

Young people make good progress in terms of their starting points. They are more able to self-regulate their behaviours. While significant events do still occur, young people identify trigger points and will sometimes take themselves away from potential conflict

situations.

Patterns and trends in physical intervention are closely monitored. In reality, the frequency of physical intervention is generally low when compared to the rate of significant incidents in the home. Staff show excellent perseverance, patience and insight. Great consideration is given to the safe use of physical intervention and this includes taking the physical environment into consideration. As a result, physical intervention is only used as a last resort and keeps young people and others in the home safe.

There are some concerns about bullying at the home. Compatibility assessment places the potential for bullying as a high priority and promotes young people's safety and sense of well-being. Along with its thoroughness in assessing compatibility the home is vigilant and staff are quick to understand when the young people may need a break from each other. One example of this is when a young person asked if they could go for a drive. The staff member responded immediately and this demonstrates the good relationships they have, as they both knew that this was a cue that the young person needed space.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The registered manager has managed this home since it was first registered in April 2016. She has extensive experience and a suitable level 4 qualification in management. Staffing arrangements in the home meet the needs of the young people. Disruption due to the turnover of substantive staff, particularly three team leaders, has been minimised by managers and leaders in this organisation. Leaders and managers have also responded effectively as new staff are introduced to the team.

Directors, the manager and staff consistently strive to maintain staffing to include familiar and experienced staff. They maintain detailed communication, including good information-sharing in handover meetings, to provide young people with firm boundaries.

Effective communication and shift organisation minimise disruption, as staff from their casual pool cover shifts when necessary. Staff have an in-depth understanding of how domestic abuse, neglect and child sexual exploitation impact on young people's self-esteem and their abilities to make attachments with others. This understanding gives staff resilience and the ability not to personalise the sometimes extremely challenging and violent behaviour directed towards them.

Staff training is managed to ensure seamless progression from induction, probationary training and then timely registration for a level 3 diploma in caring for children. All but one of the experienced staff have completed their level 3 qualification. The remaining staff are due to finish later this year. Staff also receive specific training according to the needs of the young people; this includes training on drug misuse, child sexual exploitation and self-injurious behaviours. Regular staff supervision, staff meetings and handover discussions embed consistent practice across the staff team, thus promoting

the home's statement of purpose.

Individuals receive good information about the service because the home's statement of purpose is kept up to date. Young people also receive a young people's guide which is used as part of planned transitions to the home. This information sets out clear expectations for staff and young people. Such clarity is essential for young people who persistently challenge the structures and boundaries in the home.

The manager and staff are willing to challenge placing authorities when placement planning or responses to young people's needs are not robust. For example, the manager consistently challenges the placing authority in terms of sourcing an education placement following a recent move into the home. As a result, young people feel valued because staff care enough to fight for their rights for a quality education.

During recent challenging times in the home, the manager, staff and provider have worked tirelessly to promote the welfare and safety of young people. This child-centred approach also includes the directors of the company and is an excellent reflection of the cohesion between staff, managers and leaders.

The home is progressive and improves because the manager and staff are open to scrutiny from independent monitoring, other professionals and young people. For example, the manager used feedback from a monitoring visit to improve the new admissions checklist. The process is much improved to ensure the young person, pre-planning and communication sharing are at the core of staff practice.

Regular meetings between therapists and managers are also used to monitor young people's progress. Registered managers routinely meet with the directors. Issues and new ideas are taken forward. This proactive approach is good for the service and for the development of managers and staff.

The manager is outward looking and embraces working in partnership with agencies. This approach keeps young people safe, opens up new ideas and drives improvement. The lack of shortfalls found during this inspection exemplifies the positive outcomes of robust monitoring by the management team and staff.

## **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:** 1223681

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Sandcastle Care Ltd

**Registered provider address:** 49 Whitegate Drive, Blackpool, Lancashire FY3 9DG

**Responsible individual:** Michael Swarbrick

**Registered manager:** Gina Elston

### **Inspector(s)**

Elaine Clare: social care regulatory inspector



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