

# 1252937

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home that is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to 4 children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

**Inspection dates:** 24 to 25 May 2017

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>good</b>
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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 make good progress in all areas of their development and especially in reducing some of their difficult and challenging behaviours.

- Staff skilfully build positive relationships with young people. Young people develop greater self-esteem, learn new ways of managing their emotions and develop greater empathy for others.
- Complaints are well managed. They are investigated by someone external to the home which provides complainants with an independent assessment of their concerns.
- A strong, cohesive team works well with other services provided by the organisation and other external agencies to improve outcomes for young people.
- Strong leaders and managers support innovative provision and enable staff to meet their responsibilities to young people effectively.
- Young people's health needs, including their psychological and emotional well-being, are identified and met successfully.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The 'education enrichment' service which supplements the education programme provided is insufficiently monitored and reviewed to assess how it fully supports young people's educational learning and attainment.
- Plans to assist young people to stop smoking are in place but have yet to be fully implemented and effective.
- The children's guide lacks important information that would provide young people with a full picture of how the home operates.
- Compatibility assessments undertaken prior to a young person moving in do not provide a clear picture of how any risks to each young person will be mitigated, reduced or eliminated.

## **Recent inspection history**

This is the first inspection following the home's re-registration in February 2017.

## 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
<p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress toward achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. (Regulation 8(2)(i))</p> <p>In particular, the home must ensure that the enrichment programme in place is monitored and provides evidence of how it helps each child to achieve their education and training targets, as recorded in their relevant plans.</p>	30/07/2017

### Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's guide helps children to understand: what the day to day routines of the home are ('what happens in the home'). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.22)

In particular, the guide should tell children about when their possessions or bedroom will be searched and provide them with the correct information about the educational arrangements for the home.
- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

In particular, the registered person should ensure that any assessments are fully recorded in relation to each child.
- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is an environment that supports children's physical, mental and emotional health. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.3)

In particular, the registered person should ensure that the programme developed to assist young people in stopping smoking is put into action.

- The registered person should ensure that the young people's home is maintained to a high standard which meets their physical necessities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.3)

In particular, ensure that the home is always clean and that repairs are identified and resolved quickly.

## Inspection judgements

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

Young people make good progress here and are supported by a strong staff team which clearly puts them at the centre of its practice.

Young people's care is individualised well and suits their needs. The support provided helps them to progress in all areas of their lives. The staff work consistently and extremely effectively as a cohesive team. This enables young people to understand themselves, learn from difficult situations and mistakes, manage behaviours better and develop more positive self-esteem and self-worth. The inspector observed an incident where staff managed to change an extremely negative meeting into an opportunity for young people to help each other and talk about things that concerned them. This resulted in a change of atmosphere within the home in a very short space of time and is an example of the positive impact that staff have on young people's lives both in the short and long term.

Young people are encouraged to eat healthily and generally develop healthy lifestyles. However, all young people smoke, and this is an area which the staff and senior management team have identified that could be changed. Plans are in place to implement smoking cessation programmes, and managers are monitoring progress. Therefore, no recommendation is made at this time.

Young people who previously would not engage in therapeutic support are now doing so. Therapeutic support for young people is well embedded into practice. Therapists assist with the 12-week assessment that each young person agrees to undertake when they arrive. This guides the manager in making decisions about the suitability of the home's therapeutic programme of support. Therapists work with staff to develop their understanding of young people's motivations and needs. Staff spoke positively about working with therapists and said that this really helped them to successfully engage with young people.

Young people receive only 15 hours of education, rather than the statutory 25 hours they should receive. They attend morning sessions with a private company, and their attainment and attendance improves. The company provides an enrichment programme for two hours each afternoon supported by staff from the home. The effectiveness of the programme is not monitored adequately. This is a missed opportunity to ensure that the work assists young people to improve their learning as much as possible. The use of staff

from the home blurs the lines between school and home life. As a result, for example, young people believe that they can opt out of educational trips as they can for home activities.

The organisation is aware that these arrangements are not ideal. Following discussion during the inspection, the organisation increased the time that qualified teachers lead the enrichment programme. The organisation has identified premises to use for school premises. This property will not be ready for use until later in the year and will need to meet the requirements for registration with the Department for Education.

Staff are developing an improved independence programme. This will help young people to develop holistic life skills. Young people will learn about local facilities, how to make friends, and practical skills such as how to change a plug, how to budget and menu planning. It is positive to note that staff are supporting this initiative which will be used across the organisation's homes. Young people are already involved in daily maintenance issues in the home, such as checking why a television aerial is not working.

Young people are encouraged to express their views and to listen to and respect those of others. There is a well-organised complaints process which young people use. Complaints are investigated by a senior manager who is not involved in the running of the home. This provides an independent consideration that helps young people to have confidence that their concerns will be treated fairly.

Contact arrangements with young people's family and friends are supported well. Any restrictions to contact are carefully managed, and staff develop positive relationships with family members whenever possible.

Young people are helped to move in and move out of the home well. When they move in, they are given information and staff attention to help them settle quickly. They are told what they can expect and what staff expect of them. However, some of the information in the children's guide does not accurately reflect practice in the home. For example, although the guide says that young people will keep their current school whenever possible, this is not the case. In addition, there is no information about when a young person's room or property may be searched.

The home's environment is comfortable but is not in the best state of repair. It has been recently damaged, and long-term plans to improve the environment, such as installing a new kitchen, are taking longer than expected to achieve. Young people told the inspector about issues which they wanted to be improved, such as having a mirror light in the bathroom and the cleanliness of the toilet. This demonstrates that they have pride in their environment, which is commendable. A cleaning service is employed to support staff while they have additional duties regarding young people's education. However, the cleaning staff do not always come and, at the time of inspection, had not been to the home for five days.

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

Staff, including therapists, understand safeguarding issues, and child protection and relevant referrals are made when necessary. Staff work positively with safeguarding agencies to ensure young people's safety and well-being.

There is a set programme of targets for all young people which works in conjunction with the therapy provided and at the young person's speed. The programme is written and supported by external psychologists who work with staff and managers in its implementation and review.

Risk assessments are well organised and up to date. They reflect changing needs and are readily available to staff. Assessments of need are completed for young people prior to their arrival and take into account known risks. However, while the staff can say how such decisions are made, records are not sufficiently detailed to demonstrate the thinking underlying the decisions. Staff know the young people well and anticipate and manage any risks effectively.

Key-working sessions support young people to consider and reflect on the consequences of their actions and to discuss difficult issues. The sessions occur as and when needed and are recorded well, providing a helpful log of what was discussed and a young person's responses. The sessions are also used to support young people to develop positive behaviours.

Staff follow clear, individualised procedures to prevent young people from going missing and act appropriately if they do. The staff keep young people in view when they leave the house without permission. Decisions about when to call the police are outlined in individual risk assessments and followed by staff assiduously.

Restraints are infrequent and managed appropriately. The manager confirmed that because of the rare use of restraint he intended to increase discussions with staff about techniques so that they are familiar with them. This is a positive move to help staff to be clear about when restraint is necessary and to restrain appropriately given the circumstances.

Robust recruitment procedures are implemented. The manager displayed a clear understanding of how the particular needs of young people in the home affected decisions about whom to recruit.

Health and safety matters are embedded within practice effectively. Checks are undertaken in line with any relevant legal requirements thereby assisting the staff and management to ensure young people's safety and welfare. All permanent members of staff hold an appropriate first aid qualification.

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

The registered manager is appropriately qualified and experienced to manage the home

effectively. He is committed to developing the best service possible and has good insight into the particular needs of the young people that the setting provides care for.

The organisation is forward thinking and plans innovative changes that are helpful to staff and young people. Technology is used effectively to support staff to make best use of their time and to make monitoring easier. For example, staff were very positive about the new children looked after review report format. This is pre-populated with relevant information, such the number of times that a young person has gone missing. This allows staff to focus on the content of the report and complete the task efficiently.

There are well-organised audit trails for how services are developed, monitored and reviewed. The statement of purpose reflects the needs that young people have, as well as the services offered. It provides an accurate picture and is kept under regular review. Monthly visits from independent visitors are used to develop the service further. The manager is aware of the need to complete a six-monthly review of the quality of care and has a detailed development plan, which is regularly updated. The organisation has undertaken a companywide review of children's, social workers' and independent reviewing officers' feedback, which it is using to improve both individual services and organisational aims and objectives.

Leaders and managers are very good at liaising with other agencies. They are extremely clear with placing authorities when they do not agree with actions that the authority intends to take in respect of young people's safety and welfare. However, they are equally engaged in developing positive relations. This is an area of excellence within the service.

There is a suitable staff team, which is deployed effectively to meet young people's daily needs. Of the six permanent members of staff, four hold the level 3 diploma for residential childcare, and the two other permanent members of staff are enrolled on the course and are predicted to complete it within acceptable timescales.

Well-organised staff supervision, appraisal and support systems assist staff in developing appropriate skills that align with their length of service, responsibilities and developmental goals. Staff said that they appreciate the support that they receive and consider that it helps them to reflect and develop appropriately.

Staff training systems are also well developed, and staff are well trained for their roles and responsibilities. Staff confirmed that they are able to attend a variety of courses which extend their skills, as well as mandatory training such as refresher courses in safeguarding and child protection. It is evident that the increased training regarding the home's therapeutic model of working is increasing the staff members' abilities to manage and support young people's needs effectively.

Staff consistently support young people to respect difference and develop a more tolerant attitude of others. Staff challenge any inappropriate language that young people use and help them to develop empathy for others, especially the other young people in the home.

Young people's files, both online and in hard copy, are well organised and easy to follow. The detail is clear, and documents provide a helpful record of the care provided, how a young person's needs change and what input staff have had in supporting positive change in a young person's life. Any missing information is chased. Monthly monitoring of files assists managers and staff to ensure that they are appropriately up to date.

## **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 differences 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 whom 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:** 1252937

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

**Registered provider:** Compass Children's Homes Ltd

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

**Responsible individual:** Benjamin Jordan

**Registered manager:** Matthew Wakeling

## Inspector

Ruth Coler, social care inspector

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