

SC047894

Registered provider: Care Focus Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is one of a small group of homes that are run by an independent provider. It provides care and accommodation for up to four children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. Education is available at the setting. Children have direct access to therapy as part of the services offered to them by the company.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 July 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: 20 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The children make good progress in their education.
- The dedicated staff team knows and understands the individual needs of the children.
- Staff encourage progress and celebrate the children's achievements in a variety of ways.
- The children have regular access to professional therapists.
- Staff set consistent boundaries and challenge unwanted behaviours.
- Skilled work undertaken in key-work sessions has led to children gaining the ability to reflect on past behaviours.
- The children benefit from staff who understand the importance of and facilitate family contact.
- The home works closely with families and professionals to ensure that children have well-planned transitions.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Not all of the staff have received supervision and appraisals in line with the home's policy.
- The manager has updated the home's statement of purpose. However, the revised statement has not been submitted to Ofsted.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12/07/2016	Full	Good
26/01/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10/11/2015	Full	Good

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
The registered person must notify HMCI of any revisions to the statement of purpose and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(b))	11/08/2017
The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)(c))	08/09/2017

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive consistent care and make good progress at this home. The manager and staff are committed to providing a stable and nurturing environment which caters for each child's individual needs. Children who previously struggled to settle at alternative provisions have responded very well to the home's style.

All of the children have their own child-friendly care plan, which they update regularly with their key workers. The children's opinions and aspirations for the future are fully included in these plans. The children feel invested in and listened to, which results in them recognising past behaviours that hinder their progress. A social worker said, 'They [staff] get the award for the most achieved. She [child] has progressed amazingly. They have given her the opportunity to concentrate and reflect, and she has flourished. It is an absolute success story.'

The children have developed good-quality relationships with staff who have taken the time to get to know them well. During this inspection, the home presented as a calm and joyful environment. The children interact positively with staff and use appropriate banter. Staff challenge any negative behaviour, and the children are able to engage with both staff and one another in a respectful manner. At the point of admission, many of the children were described as having extremely challenging behaviours. Professionals and parents spoken with during the inspection all report that the progress that the

children have made is due to the quality of the work undertaken by staff. One professional said, 'The staff are flexible, and they implement extremely good boundaries. The children are aware of staff expectations. The staff provide a holistic environment, which has resulted in greatly improved behaviour.'

The manager and staff work in partnership with professionals and parents. The standard of communication is of a consistently high level. The manager monitors case records and ensures that all those involved in the care plans receive regular updates. A social worker said, 'Communication is consistent. I receive detailed monthly reports. The home works in partnership by facilitating meetings and responding to emails promptly. There are very few incidents to report now due to the progress made and settled behaviour.' A parent of a child who recently returned to the family home said, 'The staff communicated brilliantly with me, they always kept me included.'

The children benefit greatly from having access to the on-site school, which Ofsted judged as good in respect of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Prior to moving into the home, many of the children were not attending school regularly. All of the children begin to study core GCSE subjects on-site. This enables the children to catch up on any learning that they have missed. Many of the children have made significant progress and successfully transferred to local mainstream schools. A teacher said, 'It has been a positive experience all round. I have never worked with a better children's home. They [staff] are committed and the manager is very proactive in her approach. We have worked together to achieve educational progress with [child] who has recently sat her core GCSE subjects.' A parent of another child said, 'I do not believe that she would have ever sat her GCSEs if she had not been at this home.' This substantial progress has led to the children realising their academic potential. All of the children who have undertaken GCSEs this year have applied for college places.

All of the children have individual healthcare plans, and the children are registered with the local doctor, dentist and optician. The staff promote and support the children's health needs by regularly monitoring their plans. This ensures that the children maintain all of their health appointments. The staff understand the individual needs of the children, including their emotional health needs. Staff receive training in therapeutic approaches, and the provider has employed professional therapists to work with the children. Staff support the children to attend art therapy and one-to-one sessions off-site. This means that children have access to specialist help which enables them to reflect, gain insight and work towards overcoming previous experiences of trauma.

The children know how to make a complaint. The comprehensive children's guide details how to make a complaint, and the actions that staff will follow to resolve it. Consultation forms are available and are actioned promptly. The child receives a written response. An independent visitor visits the home monthly, and children report that they are happy to speak with him directly. Alongside this, regularly held children's meetings provide the children with the opportunity to discuss any worries or concerns. A child spoken to during this inspection confidently said, 'I'm able to make a complaint if I want to but I don't have any to make. It is good here.'

The dedicated staff team encourages progress and celebrates the children's achievements. Each child has a positives book, which they are given on arrival at the home. The book has a warm and welcoming message written inside. These books detail the children's achievements such as exams completed, helping at the home, learning to cook a new meal and being kind to each other. Staff and children draw pictures in the books, and they also add photographs and tickets from trips out.

The children can earn extra activities or extra pocket money by taking part in the home's incentive reward scheme. This encourages the children to manage their behaviour and make further progress. The activities undertaken are chosen by the children and include holidays away, trips to the cinema, swimming and trips to theme parks. These trips give the children new experiences and the opportunity to develop their social skills further.

The home promotes family contact in line with the children's care plans. Staff understand the importance of maintaining contact for the children and their families. A parent described this as a strength of the home. They said, 'I'm so very happy with the home. The staff are brilliant with contact arrangements. They initially supervised contact and always supported with transport. When contact became unsupervised, they helped financially to enable longer stays over the holiday period.'

The recommendation given at the last inspection has been met. This related to the children having clear plans which detailed the work undertaken and any outstanding work required prior to transitions. All of the children already had pathway plans to support them to develop necessary life skills. The manager and staff are now able to track progress by monitoring a pathway plan journey record. The children are encouraged to undertake basic housekeeping skills by keeping their bedrooms tidy, learning budgeting skills, cooking and helping to clear up after mealtimes. This helps the children to develop the skills required for independent living and to take pride in their environment.

Transitions in and out of the home are well planned. The manager works closely with families and professionals to achieve successful transitions. A social worker of a child that has recently left and returned to their parents' care said, 'The home enabled and managed a good, smooth transition.' The child's parent said, 'She learned such a lot at the home. She is now more motivated and able to reflect. They [staff] really supported the move home and planned it very well.'

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

The home provides a settled environment for the children. The staff work hard to ensure that they respond in a consistent manner. The staff challenge any unsafe behaviour effectively and reward positive behaviour. The children respond well to the staff, with whom they have developed good, trusting relationships. Skilled work undertaken in key-work sessions has led to children gaining the ability to reflect on past behaviours. One of the children said, 'I wouldn't be here today without the help of staff as I was placing myself in very risky situations.'

The staff complete comprehensive, good-quality risk assessments. These assessments detail strategies for staff to follow to reduce any individual risks. The manager reviews and monitors the assessments regularly. A social worker said, 'Their [staff's] safety planning and risk assessments are very thorough.' An education professional said, 'The home has risk assessed every school trip and event. The children are cared for in a very safe, stable environment.'

Prior to arriving at the home, all of the children had a significant history of going missing from their family home or previous place of care. The children have made significant progress in this area. There has only been one incident of a child going missing since the last inspection. Staff responded very well to this incident, which did not require police intervention. Staff followed the child, never losing sight of them, and successfully defused the situation, resulting in the child returning safely of their own accord.

The home does not allow the children to have mobile phones or unsupervised internet and telephone access. This is necessary for the children due to the significant risks that they face. The provider has detailed and clear policies in place for internet and phone safety, which the staff follow consistently. This includes the children being monitored on a one-to-one basis to ensure that they are protected from potentially unsafe activity.

There have been no safeguarding incidents since the last inspection. All of the staff have undertaken mandatory safeguarding training. Staff spoken with during this inspection are very knowledgeable about whistleblowing procedures. They understand that they have a duty to safeguard the children and to work in line with the home's safeguarding policy. Staff have the necessary knowledge to ensure that they recognise any shortfalls. Sound procedures are in place to equip the staff to take action if required.

Sanctions are fair, proportionate and justified. The manager oversees the sanctions to ensure that they are effective. If the manager is involved in applying the sanction, the deputy manager reviews the actions, meaning that all of the sanctions are monitored objectively. The child's key workers discuss the sanction with the child and give them the opportunity to comment. This helps the child to gain an understanding of any consequences and to develop skills to reduce negative behaviours. A parent said, 'Because of the work done, my child is now able to make safe choices.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The newly registered manager has a relevant level 5 qualification. She has high aspirations for the children, who she knows well, as she has worked at the home for a number of years prior to taking up the position of manager. She is calm in her approach, has a clear vision for the home and is passionate about ensuring that the children continue to make progress. A member of staff said, 'The home is managed well. The new manager is able to give both positive and negative feedback to staff and is motivational in her approach.'

The one requirement from the last inspection has not been met and is therefore repeated. Although staff supervision and appraisals are of a good quality, they are still

not occurring for all of the staff as regularly as required and in line with the home's own policy. The manager has met part of the requirement relating to keeping an up-to-date record of staff qualifications and training. There is now a system which shows that established staff in the home hold a relevant level 3 qualification, and all eligible staff have begun to undertake their level 3 qualification. The new system highlights any mandatory training that is required. This ensures that the manager is aware of any training or training refresher needs.

There is adequate staffing and the rota is designed to meet the individual needs of the children. During holiday time, staff swap or work extra shifts to ensure that the rota is covered and that no agency staff are required. The staff spoken to said that staff morale is good. The staff understand the importance of having a team that knows and understands the children and any risks to safeguarding them. Having a stable consistent staff team enables the children to develop positive long-term relationships.

The monthly staff meetings are structured and informative. The staff use this time to discuss any further training which may be beneficial to the children. They also discuss the progress that the children are making and monitor their own interactions with the children. This ensures that the children continue to receive a consistent response.

The manager monitors the care practice and the children's progress. The independent visitor provides well-considered reports that contain recommendations for improvement. The manager and the independent visitor work well together to drive progress. This continual monitoring ensures that the children receive a high-quality service.

The staff understand the ethos of the home as detailed in the home's statement of purpose. The ethos of the home is translated effectively into daily practice. The manager regularly reviews and updates the statement of purpose. However, the updated version was not submitted to Ofsted as required.

The home provides a safe physical environment for the children. There has been some recent redecoration, and the manager is committed to achieving continued progress in this area.

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: SC047894

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care Focus Limited

Registered provider address: Care Focus Limited, 3rd Floor, 24 Chiswell Street,
London EC1Y 4YX

Responsible individual: Jean Lloyd

Registered manager: Deborah Buttery

Inspector

Lynne Drage: social care inspector

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