

SC461938

Registered provider: Crystal Care Solutions Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is one of several homes within a private organisation that provides care and accommodation for up to two young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 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: 25 January 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:

- Young people make consistent progress in all aspects of their lives.
- Risks relating to missing from home, child sexual exploitation and self-harm are managed effectively. As a result, young people are kept safe from harm and risks are reducing.
- Young people's attendance at education is good and this contributes to the positive progress that they make with their education.
- The health needs of young people are met well. Detailed health plans are in place that clearly outline the individual health needs of young people and how these are being met.
- Effective partnership working between the home and other professionals ensures that young people continue to develop and have improved outcomes.
- The views, wishes and feelings of young people are central to the day-to-day running of the home. Key-work sessions and young people's meetings take place regularly and allow young people to discuss all aspects of the home, their care, and individual issues relating to them.
- Young people benefit from a wide range of social and recreational activities in and out of the home. This enables them to develop relationships and build their self-esteem and confidence.
- Relationships between the staff and young people are good. Young people feel able to discuss issues with staff and know that staff will listen to them and offer them appropriate support, advice and guidance.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Although behaviour management in the home is good, the records relating to incidents of physical intervention and room searches lack sufficient information. Furthermore, debriefs with young people do not routinely take place and the manager of the home does not overview all such incidents in order to identify possible trends or patterns.
- Staff do not consistently adhere to the home's policy of not smoking near young people. Young people often observe some staff smoking in the home's rear garden.
- Although the home takes effective action when young people are missing from home, and ensures that an independent return interview has taken place, the missing from home records do not adequately demonstrate this.
- Some records and plans are not signed and dated by the author. Furthermore, some plans do not demonstrate that all staff have read and understood them.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
26/10/2016	Full	Good
09/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
23/06/2015	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
<p>35: Behaviour management policies and records</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>the name of the child; details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure (‘the user’) and any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure.</p> <p>Within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so (‘the authorised person’) has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(a)(b))</p>	<p>01/09/2017</p>

Recommendations

- Ensure that, under regulation 46, the registered person reviews the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home’s location and strategies for managing these. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 64, paragraph 15.1)

In particular, the review should include all known risks in the community and evaluate the impact these have on the young people living in the home.

- Ensure that all staff consistently follow the home's policies and procedures for the benefit of the children in the home's care. Everyone working at the home must understand his or her roles, responsibilities, and what they are authorised to decide on their own initiative. There should be clear lines of accountability. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.20)
- Statutory guidance on children who run away, or go missing from home or care, sets out the steps local authorities and their partners should take to prevent children from going missing and to protect them when they go missing. Children's homes should have regard to the relevant aspects of this guidance. Records must be kept detailing all individual incidents when children go missing from the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.25, and page 46, paragraph 9.31)

In particular, ensure that the missing from home records state whether an independent return home interview has taken place.

- Ensure that all children's case records (regulation 36) are kept up to date and stored securely while they remain in the home. Case records must be kept up to date, signed, and dated by the author of each entry. Plans should also demonstrate that staff have read and understood them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people benefit from individualised care to meet their needs. Placement plans clearly outline the placement objectives, and demonstrate the journey of each young person from their starting points when they first came to live at the home. Staff have a clear understanding of both young people's needs and how these are being met. Furthermore, they speak positively about the progress the young people have made. The staff share information regularly at handovers and team meetings so that they are all up to date with each young person's progress. A member of staff said, 'We all know where each young person is up to, just as much as their key worker, due to the good levels of communication between staff.'

Young people are well supported and make good progress with their education. Staff ensure that there are good routines in place for the young people and this promotes their regular, punctual attendance at school. Young people are encouraged and supported to complete their homework. Regular communication between the home and schools enables the sharing of relevant information to support each young person. The home is also proactive in addressing issues at school, such as when one young person was having trouble because of other young people. This was quickly addressed by the home and arrangements were made for the young person to move to a different part of the school, which is what she had wanted. Overall, education plans are detailed and

clearly outline each young person's progress towards achieving very positive educational outcomes.

Young people's health needs are well known and understood by staff. Healthcare plans are detailed and include individual health needs and how these are being met. Young people are encouraged to attend medical appointments and staff will support them with this. Staff have effective relationships with health professionals and work collaboratively to ensure that the correct care is provided. Furthermore, staff ensure that young people get expert advice and guidance from specialist services including therapeutic services, and child sexual exploitation and sexual health professionals. Staff are proactive in ensuring that young people receive appropriate health checks in order to diagnose conditions that affect their health and development. For example, arrangements were made for a young person who displays challenging behaviours at times to be assessed for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. A diagnosis for this has now been made and the young person is receiving the appropriate support and medication to manage this. The arrangements for managing young people's medication are thorough and safe. All staff are adequately trained in administering medication, so that young people receive their medication in line with their prescription. Consequently, the health and development needs of young people are met well in the home.

The views, wishes and feelings of young people are a central part of the home's functioning and they are sought regularly through day-to-day discussions, weekly young people's meetings, and planned key-work sessions. Plans and records in the home clearly demonstrate that the young people's views, wishes and feelings are taken into account. Key-work sessions take place regularly and address individual issues for young people, such as education, health and behaviour. All staff are involved in key working and this ensures that all staff offer support, advice and guidance to young people at a time when they need it.

Relationships between the staff and young people are good. The staff spend time with the young people talking and listening to them and undertaking activities. A young person who is due to move to adult residential care next year said, 'The staff talk to me regularly and I feel listened to. I will miss them all when I leave the home next year.' Furthermore, the two young people living in the home have a good relationship despite their age difference and having different interests. Bullying is regularly discussed in young people's meetings and the young people are given the opportunity to share any concerns about bullying. Both young people regularly confirm to staff that they do not feel bullied by each other, even when they have had a disagreement.

Young people have positive experiences while living in the home. For example, for a young person's birthday the staff arranged for a celebration to take place. The young people went out for a meal with staff and the young person was given birthday presents and a cake. Furthermore, the home was decorated with balloons and banners. The young person proudly showed the inspector her birthday presents and cake, and spoke about how much she had enjoyed her birthday celebrations. Young people's positive experiences have contributed greatly to them being happy and settled while living in the home. Furthermore, staff provide them with positive memories of their time in the home.

The home fully supports the young people in relation to contact with people who are important to them. Staff at the home communicate regularly with the family and friends

of the young people to ensure that contact arrangements and expectations are clear. Young people are encouraged to spend time with their friends and one young person's friends visit the home regularly. Detailed contact arrangements are recorded in the young people's placement plans and are reviewed and updated regularly. This means that young people have safe, quality contact with family and friends.

Young people are supported to build their independence skills in preparation for adulthood. Staff spend time with the young people, supporting them to prepare meals and to keep their bedrooms tidy. Furthermore, the young people go shopping with staff and are supported to manage the shopping for the home and to keep within the agreed budget. This supports young people to prepare for independence. Transition support is also in place for one young person who is due to leave the home next year. A social worker from the adult services team is now involved with the young person to ensure that suitable transition arrangements, including finding a new home and education provision, are in place. The adult team social worker said, 'The home is proactive in ensuring that suitable transition support is in place for the young person. It is supporting the young person to build her independence and to take responsibility for her own actions in preparation for adulthood. The home has several visual prompts in place to support her to undertake tasks independently. The communication with me from the home is very good.' This demonstrates the home's commitment to supporting the young person for a successful transition to adulthood.

The home environment provides a nice, secure and nurturing environment for young people to live in. Recent home improvements include the decoration of a young person's bedroom and the addition of a new bathroom. Further home improvements are planned to take place. This demonstrates the home's commitment to providing young people with a homely and comfortable place to live. However, one young person indicated that she regularly observes some staff smoking in the rear garden of the home. A full ashtray was on the garden table during the inspection. The interim manager removed this once it was highlighted. The fact that staff regularly smoke in the vicinity of young people is not in line with the company's policy on smoking.

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

Safeguarding practice in the home is robust, which ensures that young people are safe from harm. Young people say that they feel safe and protected in the home because staff have a clear understanding of the risks to them, such as going missing from care, child sexual exploitation and self-harm. Safeguarding practices in the home are good due to the knowledge, skills and experience staff have in relation to safeguarding. Staff are adequately trained in safeguarding, which enables them to recognise and respond appropriately to any safeguarding issues that arise.

Young people say that they can talk to the staff should they have any safeguarding concerns. Young people know how to complain, and are confident that, when they do, this will be taken seriously. One young person made a complaint following a physical intervention and she stated that she felt this was effectively dealt with. When young people have made complaints, records demonstrate that managers take appropriate action to address them. This demonstrates that the young people are supported to share

safeguarding concerns and that they are confident action will be taken.

Staff regularly review and update all risks for young people. Risk assessments clearly outline the individual risks for young people, the strategies in place to manage these, and reflect the reducing risk levels over time. Although the staff spoken to during the inspection had a good understanding of the risks each young person faces, the risk assessments do not demonstrate that all staff have read and understood them. Staff talk to young people about the risks that they face so they have a better understanding of these. Consequently, the risks to young people are reducing.

Behaviour management in the home is generally good. Both young people can present with challenging behaviour at times due to their own health and development needs. Staff use de-escalation techniques to manage behaviours and will only use physical intervention as a last resort to ensure the safety and well-being of all involved. The young people respond well to the rewards for positive behaviour, which far outweigh consequences for negative behaviour. Consequences are fair and reasonable and are restorative in nature. When incidents have occurred in the home, appropriate support and intervention is in place for young people and they are given the opportunity to discuss the incident fully with staff. This provides young people with the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and the intervention used by staff to manage this. On one occasion, a debrief with a young person following the use of physical intervention was undertaken by the member of staff who carried out the intervention. Furthermore, records relating to room searches that have taken place do not demonstrate that young people were informed of these prior to the search taking place. This does not demonstrate that the young person has been given the opportunity to discuss room searches prior to them taking place, or to discuss physical interventions with an independent person. Furthermore, not all intervention records are effectively reviewed by the manager of the home. However, the robust procedures in place in relation to the management of behaviour in the home result in improved behaviour, as well as increasing young people's self-esteem, confidence and emotional stability.

The manager and staff have a clear understanding of the statutory guidance in relation to children who run away or go missing from home or care. This means that they are able to safeguard young people from the risks associated with being missing from home. Furthermore, the proactive approach to young people going missing from the home means that such incidents are rare. When young people have been missing from the home, appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to inform relevant people and to locate the young person to ensure their quick and safe return. When young people return home, staff offer them a warm welcome, check on their welfare and arrange for an independent return interview to take place. However, missing from home records do not demonstrate that an independent return interview has always taken place. Despite this shortfall, the procedures in place when young people are missing from home are robust. Furthermore, young people rarely go missing for long periods.

There is a review of the home's location in place, but it does not address all known risks within the community. Such risks include the close transport links, shops, bars and other children's homes in the locality. The managers have not evaluated the information available to them to show what this would mean in considering a new placement, or the impact this would have on young people living in the home. Consequently, young people

are not fully safeguarded from the risks in the community.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last inspection, the registered manager has left the home. A new interim manager is now in post. She has submitted an application to Ofsted to be the registered manager. She is suitably experienced and qualified for the role. The interim manager has worked in another of the company's homes for several years and has been a deputy manager for 18 months. She spoke positively about the level five qualification in leadership and management she has recently completed. She found the reflection on the practice element of the qualification a real learning experience that has developed her skills as a manager. Despite the short period of time she has been managing the home, she has a good understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses and has a plan in place to make improvements.

The staff team and young people speak positively about their new manager. They describe her as being 'fair but firm'. Staff and young people feel the manager is approachable and supportive and she has made a positive impact since she came to work at the home. A member of staff said, 'The manager is very supportive. I have worked at many different children's homes and I really rate her as a manager.' Another member of staff said, 'The new manager has some good ideas. She is also providing me with opportunities to develop.' This demonstrates that the new manager is an asset to the home.

All staff working at the home are suitably qualified, or working towards gaining their qualification. Rotas are planned to ensure that more experienced staff support less experienced members of staff. Staff receive regular training and development opportunities to ensure their continuous professional development. Furthermore, they are supported through regular team meetings and supervision. Team meetings enable the staff team to discuss each young person in detail and reflect on practice. The meetings also enable staff to discuss current issues, guidance and legislation relating to young people, safeguarding and residential care. Supervision records demonstrate that supervision is reflective in nature, and allows staff to identify areas for personal development and the impact their practice has on young people. The progress on actions set at supervision sessions are monitored at subsequent supervision sessions to ensure that they are progressed. The support systems in place for staff ensure that there is continuous professional development and that staff provide a good quality of care to the young people they care for. Consequently, outcomes for the young people are improved.

Collaborative working is well established in the home and ensures that young people receive the most appropriate support to meet their needs. The manager and staff regularly communicate with other professionals, including placing social workers, independent reviewing officers, and education and health professionals, to share information and ensure that young people are receiving the most appropriate support and intervention. Placement plans are reviewed and updated monthly and shared with relevant professionals as appropriate. This outlines issues relating to health, education, behaviour, contact and activities and demonstrates the young person's progress in all areas. An independent reviewing officer said, 'Staff communicate well with social care

and support the young person to share her views. Staff prepare well for child looked after (CLA) reviews and contribute well. At the Last CLA review, the report shared was one of the best I have ever seen.' The good level of partnership working between the home and other professionals contributes to the progress that young people make and improves their outcomes.

Monitoring and review systems in the home enable the manager to review the quality of care provided to the young people living in the home. The monitoring systems in the home are good. They occur on a regular basis and are undertaken by an independent person, who completes independent reviews of safeguarding practice in the home and the home's conduct in relation to promoting young people's well-being. The regular monitoring and review systems in place enable the manager to identify areas for development and to take action to address any minor shortfalls identified, thus ensuring that dips in the quality of care are quickly rectified, practice is strengthened, and that children's continuing progress is central to the home's practice. The interim manager provides strong leadership and has a clear commitment to the continued development and sustained improvement in the home. Consequently, the care delivered to the young people is of a good standard.

The home's statement of purpose has recently been updated to reflect the change of manager. The statement of purpose clearly outlines the ethos, aims, and objectives of the home. 'Our dedicated team ensures that a young person's emotional needs and well-being are always at the centre of our practice and our specialist child or young person-centred approach consistently achieves the best possible outcomes for our service users. Our paramount duty to a young person entering our care is to support them to feel safe. This is achieved through the provision of a stable living environment and laying the foundations of a trusting relationship with the staff team.'

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: SC461938

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Crystal Care Solutions Limited

Registered provider address: Bank House, Market Square, Congleton, Cheshire
CW12 1ET

Responsible individual: James O'Leary

Registered manager: Post Vacant

Inspector

Lisa Mulcahy, social care inspector

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