

1225887

Registered provider: Benecare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The children's home is privately owned. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for two children from eight to 18 years of age, with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 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: 18 October 2016

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:

- Children are making progress, gaining confidence and working towards independence.
- Relationships between young people and staff are warm and caring. When

young people are worried, staff use a nurturing approach to engage them and put them at ease.

- Young people at the home are safe. Online safety is a priority, and young people have undertaken some specific learning around this issue to help keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- One young person has made progress in education. The registered manager has sought suitable education for another young person; her efforts on this matter have been wide-ranging and tireless.
- The registered manager is leading her team effectively. Drawing on the knowledge gained in her management qualification, she is managing change effectively and developing the performance of the team.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/10/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
26/04/2016	Full	Requires improvement

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from trusting relationships with enthusiastic staff. Staff invest time and energy in the children, supporting them through difficult times consistently and effectively. Staff are passionate and determined in their approach to engaging the children in their plans and the development of the home. Advocacy has been sought for one child for whom the local authority has not yet identified a school placement. The registered manager has tirelessly pursued the matter. This dedicated approach is indicative of the ethos of the home, where the children are the key focus and benefit from the efforts of the team.

Highly motivated staff seek inventive ways to engage the children in education. Children who do not have an education placement are educated in the home with a tutor. Staff have worked collaboratively with the tutor to gain an insight into the education being provided; this has enabled them to actively support children to engage in the learning process. One child is in the process of changing college courses to better suit her needs. Creative staff have incorporated interview preparation into life-skills work. Consequently, the children are supported to develop techniques and skills to prepare them for new challenges.

Interested staff seek opportunities to expand independence skills for the children. They are encouraged to cook, budget for their clothing and toiletries and, for one who is older, manage a part of the weekly food budget. As a result of this, the children are learning new skills in preparation for moving on.

The strong and determined staff work closely with the children to support them to overcome challenges. Their consistent and nurturing approach has enabled the children to adjust to being looked after and to overcome difficult emotions from previous placement breakdowns. Effective partnership working between the staff, parents and child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) provides the children with consistency across the care they receive. One parent commented, 'The staff work in true partnership with me, which is the best you could hope for as a parent.'

The manager actively uses her initiative and skills to carefully match the children to the placement. Admissions to the home have been well thought out and planned. Children have experienced care from dedicated and well-qualified staff who are persistent in working through difficult behaviours to enable the children to find stability. As a result of this, the children are benefiting from consistent care, which provides them with a secure base.

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

The children feel safe. They are clear about who they can go to when they are worried and they confirm that they feel supported by the staff. All of the children have trusted adults in the home that they talk to regularly. Enthusiastic staff take time to get to know

the children. They learn behavioural triggers to enable them to support the children to work through crisis behaviours and understand that the staff will support them. The use of physical restraint is infrequent because the staff are skilled in refocusing the children. Consequently, the children benefit from effective, predictable and consistent care that supports their needs.

The children both spend regular time with their families. The managers and staff welcome families and friends to visit, fostering positive relationships with key figures in the lives of the children. The staff support the children to develop family time to suit their needs and work at their own pace. One parent commented, 'The staff are wonderful, and communication with them is good. They know my [child] well and do a good job in helping him.'

Safeguarding is regularly reviewed through staff meetings and supervisions. When allegations are made, the staff follow clear guidance. They know what to report, when and to whom. Detailed records are shared with social workers and the designated officer to enable allegations to be fully investigated. This thorough and well-organised approach to managing allegations demonstrates the strong leadership and management at the home. As a result of this, the children and staff are protected and supported when allegations are made.

Online safety is a priority. One child was sent inappropriate material online. She knew that this was not acceptable and immediately reported it to the staff, and has since undertaken an online course to further her skills in keeping herself safe. This is a good example of the responsive care that is provided to meet the changing needs of the children.

When additional resources are required to support behaviour, they are provided. The manager and her team work well with outside agencies to ensure consistency of care among professionals. A social worker from CAMHS describes the staff as, 'really helpful, friendly and willing to join in sessions at the home where appropriate'. To its credit, the home manages behaviour with minimal police intervention. Despite challenging times, the home has used a restorative and nurturing approach. As a result of this, children have worked through their issues and not experienced repeated rejection or faced unnecessary charges. One parent commented, 'They did not criminalise [the child] and that has been key in her settling, as the staff did not give up on her.'

The children are encouraged to work with staff to develop their care plans and goals. This partnership approach enables the children to engage in making decisions and exploring their identity. One child earned a pet as a reward. This has been a key feature in raising her self-esteem, and encouraged her to take responsibility for caring for the animal. This creative use of goal planning engages the children in developing their decision-making skills and provides opportunities for achievement when goals are met.

Recruitment and pre-employment checks are rigorous and detailed to ensure that candidates will bring the required personal skills and attributes to the team. Successful candidates visit the home prior to a role offer being made, in order to assess their

practical skills in engaging with children. This also provides opportunities for the children to have a say in who works in their home. New staff are positive about the induction, feeling well prepared for working with the children. They are clear about safeguarding practices and how and when to report concerns and to whom.

Visitors to the home are signed-in and made aware of emergency evacuation plans upon arrival. The fire safety equipment and systems have recently been checked, and staff confirm that they know how to use the fire panel. The premises are well maintained, providing a safe physical environment. The children's bedrooms express their individual tastes and are decorated to the same high standard which can be seen throughout the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has completed her level 5 diploma in leadership and management. Staff have commented positively on her ability to recognise and resolve issues within the team. Her examination of team dynamics is well documented and solution-focused. She is clear about her expectations of the team and they are clear on their roles and responsibilities. Consequently, the team is developing well and morale is high.

Training is prioritised dependent on the needs of the home. Currently, two staff are undertaking the level 3 diploma in residential childcare, and five staff have already attained this qualification. Recent training has included autistic spectrum disorder, implementing the 'Prevent' strategy and responding to the risk of child sexual exploitation. The registered manager has also arranged for workshops on relevant topics, such as the tutor delivering a workshop on education to enable staff to support the child receiving education at home. This proactive approach to training demonstrates the registered manager's commitment to continuously developing the staff's skills to meet the needs of the children.

The statement of purpose provides stakeholders with information about the services that the home provides. The young person's guide gives information to children about the home and what to expect in terms of routines, activities and who is there to help. Both reliably provide the reader with a good overview of the home, services and routines.

The registered manager has well-established monitoring systems in place that quickly identify any areas requiring attention. For example, a medication error was swiftly identified and medical advice sought to ensure the safety of the child. A thorough investigation followed, resulting in a change of practice to minimise the risk of future errors.

Aspirations for the children are high. The registered manager and her team work tirelessly to support the children to settle in the placement. One independent reviewing officer commented, 'The main progress for [child] has been stability. She is now more able to settle and focus on the future, which she hadn't been able to do until now. I can see a future for her in terms of moving on and enjoying a good quality of life.'

An outcomes measurement tool is used to provide a baseline of the children's needs and to monitor subsequent progress against. This system is linked to the care planning and risk assessments for the children, and flags up areas of concern. Worksheets are produced that support targeted key-working sessions. One child said, 'I love being at the home, staff are wonderful and help you with things. I couldn't ask for anything more from them.' The effective tracking and monitoring of the children's needs ensures that key work is delivered to focus on areas of need, which enables the children to progress.

Frequent and effective communication between the staff and placing authorities enables transparent and clear working practice. One social worker commented that, 'The team has a consistent approach; the network works closely together so [child] doesn't feel she has to manage them.' The registered manager draws on information from a range of sources to ensure that impact risk assessments are rigorous when considering prospective placements. The well-organised and transparent approach to working in partnership ensures that placements are well planned, and communication between professionals and families is open, honest and consistent.

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: 1225887

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Benecare Limited

Registered provider address: 113a St Johns Hill, Sevenoaks TN13 3PE

Responsible individual: Stephen Richmond

Registered manager: Patricia Clinton

Inspector

Sarah Olliver, social care inspector

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