

SC368032

Registered provider: Constant Child Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

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

Inspection dates: 21 to 22 August 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 27 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because:

- The maintenance of the physical environment of the home is poor.

- Managers and staff do not always follow the formal process for recording and investigating complaints.
- Managers' monitoring of the quality of care is not sufficiently thorough.
- One young person's bedroom had a sharp nail exposed, which presented a health and safety risk.
- Staff do not ensure that physical restraint records hold sufficient details.
- Not all staff have updated training in physical restraint, fire safety training, first aid and the administration of medication.
- Young people do not have support of an independent advocate.

The children's home's strengths:

- Young people develop positive relationships with staff.
- Young people engage in a range of activities inside the home and in the community.
- Managers and staff work effectively with partner agencies.
- Managers are proactive in ensuring that young people are able to access health care services.
- Managers and staff listen to the views and opinions of young people and try to meet their requests wherever possible.
- Social workers are positive about the service their young people receive from staff at the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/02/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
15/11/2016	Full	Good
04/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
30/07/2015	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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who, in particular, to the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6(1)(2)(c)(i))	30/11/2017
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard requires the registered person to ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12(2)(c))	29/09/2017
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that in particular, to the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1)(2)(h))	29/09/2017
The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake appropriate professional development. (Regulation 33(4)(a)). In particular, physical intervention training, fire safety training, first aid and the administration of medication.	29/09/2017
The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of a use of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes the details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure, a description of the measure and its duration, details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the use of the measure and the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(a)(ii),(iv),(v),(vii)) In particular, include more detail and analysis of each event of physical intervention.	29/09/2017
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39(3))	29/09/2017

Recommendations

- Ensure that the child has access to appropriate advocacy support, and where possible this should be provided by a person that the child chooses. Looked-after children are entitled to an independent advocate to advise them and ensure they have the support needed to express their views, wishes and feelings about their care and lives. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.16).

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

The maintenance of the physical environment in the home and garden has declined. Managers and staff have not ensured that damage in the home is quickly repaired. Many areas of the home have scuffed and scratched paintwork. In one young person's bedroom, handles were missing from a wardrobe, furniture was damaged and curtains were not hung up securely. In another young person's bedroom, the bed-cover was dirty. A large exposed nail was sticking out of a piece of furniture next to one young person's bed. One bedroom window was not safe. The inspector discussed these shortfalls with a senior manager at the inspection. This resulted in immediate action being taken to address some of these issues.

The garden area requires attention. There is an old playhouse at the end of the garden which is collapsing, leaving a considerable amount of debris. There are piles of slabs and other rubble at the bottom of the garden. A fence panel is falling down, and trampoline pole safety covers are torn, exposing metal underneath. These pose potential health and safety risks to young people using the garden and detract from their overall enjoyment of the space.

Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff. Staff are attentive, nurturing and caring. They promote tolerance, equality and diversity. For example, staff help young people attend church or mosque. Young people gain confidence and contribute their thoughts and ideas to young people's meetings. These include, for example, ideas for holidays or trying new activities. Managers let young people know whether their requests are agreed or not. Young people feel involved and know that they are valued members of the household. One young person told the inspector, 'I have plenty to do; there is always something to keep me busy.'

Young people are aware of the complaints procedure. However, staff do not always follow the formal process for recording complaints. Consequently, young people do not always have a response to their complaint. In addition, not all young people have an independent advocate. One young person told the inspector that he was not sure about where he wanted to live and thought that having an advocate would help him, as they

would talk to professionals on his behalf.

Young people are all at school and their attendance and punctuality are good. One young person has recently started a new school after an extended period out of school. Managers worked well with other professionals to identify the school. They helped the young person with his move, improving his learning and educational opportunities.

Young people are in good health. They eat a varied diet and help with planning meals. Young people have access to local and specialist health services. Managers and staff work well with health colleagues and promote young people's emotional and mental health. Managers are proactive in identifying gaps in services for young people and escalate any concerns. This helps to ensure that young people receive the help and support they need. Arrangements for managing medication are safe and effective.

Young people enjoy a variety of activities. This includes swimming, bowling and various clubs in the community.

One young person has recently left the home and moved to a semi-independence placement. Her social worker was complimentary about the support she had from staff at the home. She told the inspector, '[young person] made excellent progress while living there and staff supported her moving on to a new placement.'

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

The recording of physical restraint requires improvement. Staff do not always describe the behaviour leading to a physical restraint, including what they had done to try to de-escalate the situation. Staff do not explain why a method was not successful or why they have used an alternative hold. A small number of recordings are inaccurate. For example, staff have described a floor hold when this was not used. This compromised the purpose of having a record, which is aimed at validating the action taken by staff.

Managers and staff make sure that risk assessments are detailed and up to date. Managers and staff liaise with other professionals to share information and strategies to respond to any emerging risks. Staff work together to manage young people's behaviour and reinforce boundaries. A social worker commented, 'Since being there, he is more settled. Staff have a forgiving nature with him, which has helped him to settle. There are fewer incidents as a result.'

Young people rarely go missing from home. Staff worked with police and other agencies to ensure that young people are safely returned home. Staff complete further work with young people in individual key-work sessions to help reinforce the message of staying safe. Each young person has a missing from home risk assessment that identifies his or her vulnerabilities and needs. Staff share information with the police and local police visit young people and reinforce safety messages about the risks of aggressive behaviour and going missing from the home. Since the last inspection, there have been no incidents of young people's involvement in child sexual exploitation or radicalisation.

Managers ensure that there is a safe recruitment system in place. This helps to protect young people from adults who may wish to harm them.

Managers and staff undertake health and safety checks of electrical, gas and fire equipment. Fire drills take place in line with organisational requirements and all young people understand why these take place.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager has a level 5 diploma in leadership and management services for children and young people. She has been in post since July 2015.

The home's statement of purpose is a detailed document, which in part describes the service currently offered. However, the shortfalls identified in this inspection detract from the service described, particularly in relation to the home environment.

Leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the progress young people are making, in particular in their behaviour and education. However, internal monitoring systems have failed to identify issues raised during this inspection. The registered manager has not ensured that the home and garden is well maintained and safe. Young people's files are not well organised, and there is a risk that information may fall out and be lost. Managers and staff have filed some records in the wrong files.

Staff undertake a range of training opportunities. However, not all staff have completed refresher training in essential areas. These include first aid, physical restraint, fire safety and the administration of medication training. This means that staff knowledge is not being kept up to date.

All staff receive monthly supervision. This enables staff to discuss young people's needs, as well as their own professional development. Staff receive support to complete their roles and have their practice reviewed and discussed. The majority of staff have completed a level 3 diploma in caring for young people in residential care, or are undertaking the course. This improves staff's skills and abilities in caring for young people.

Social workers are complimentary about the communication with staff at the home. One social worker told the inspector, 'Managers and staff are very good at communicating and working in partnership with the local authority. I would place other children here.'

The registered manager has met the requirements made at the last inspection. For example, managers and staff now report safeguarding concerns to the local authority and escalate any concerns about shortfalls in service provision for young people.

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: SC368032

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Constant Child Care Ltd

Registered provider address: Beecham Business Centre, Beecham Business Park, Northgate, Aldridge, West Midlands WS9 8TZ

Responsible individual: Barry Edwards

Registered manager: Lisa Sherwood

Inspector

Julia Wright, social care inspector

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