

1250931

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is one of several that the organisation operates. It accommodates up to six children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The organisation re-registered this home in May 2017.

Inspection dates: 31 August to 1 September 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

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 outstanding because:

- The staff work as a very cohesive team and this provides consistent, well-thought-through and reflective care that helps young people to make excellent progress.
- Staff form strong, caring relationships with young people, enabling young people to talk about difficult issues in their lives. Young people are better able to understand the impact that their experiences have had on their choices.
- Behaviour management is excellent and helps young people to develop better coping strategies.
- Staff act as effective advocates for young people, and this advocacy results in positive changes in young people's lives.
- Safeguarding is very well understood by all staff and is consistently implemented. Any safeguarding concerns are followed up rigorously.
- Managers continually focus on improving the care and support that they provide.
- Staff supervision is of a very high quality and impacts positively on the ability of staff to meet young people's needs.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Young people are not always aware of how their views are taken into account.
- The home's location assessment does not fully analyse information about the area where the home is sited.

Recent inspection history

Not applicable.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Positive relationships are those which are characterised by consistency and unconditional positive regard for the child on the part of the carer; and where the carer acknowledges the importance of understanding and responding to the child's lived experience of care. Positive, stable relationships help the child to feel secure and cared about and for. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 21, paragraph 4.3)
In particular, the registered person should ensure that staff feed back to young people how any actions identified at weekly children's meetings have, or have not, been acted on.
- When establishing the home, the registered person must ensure that it is suitably located so that children are effectively safeguarded and can access services to meet needs identified in their relevant plans (see regulations 12(2)(c)). Under regulation 46, the registered person should review 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. Providers should refer to the non-statutory advice about the location assessment process: Children's homes regulations amendments 2014: Advice for children's homes providers on new duties under regulations that came into effect in January and April 2014. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Trusting relationships with the staff assist young people to develop a secure base from which they make exceptional social, behavioural and academic progress. Young people live here for some time, in one instance for four years. The staff team members ensure that young people's experiences mirror those of a normal family life. They take every opportunity to get alongside young people and understand their needs. This approach enhances young people's sense of belonging. One young person said, 'I feel loved. The adults are more like family.'

Any changes in the make-up or dynamic of the group of young people are well and sensitively thought through. The staff involve young people in planning their care from the time they arrive. The staff ensure that each young person understands why he or she has come to live here, and they make good decisions about young people's compatibility. Staff pay close attention to how they introduce a young person to the

home, taking full account of how each young person understands information and how others can help with this transition. A parent was very positive about how staff had helped both herself and her daughter through this change. The staff team also prepares and supports well the young people who already live at the home. Young people quickly adapt to any change in the group of young people who live here and quickly form positive relationships with staff.

Education is valued and promoted extremely well. Most young people attend school 100% of the time. The staff help each young person to make progress at their pace, whether this is to improve their exam grades or to prepare for senior school. They work in very close cooperation with each school so that each young person's needs are identified and met. The staff are proud of young people's achievements and celebrate these in an album about the young person's life at the home. Consequently, young people achieve exceptionally well, they are positive about their education and have aspirations for their futures.

Thoughtful and effective planning and evaluation of young people's needs results in holistic care where any necessary changes are dealt with promptly. The reflective practice employed by staff consistently takes account of all relevant information to inform the care and support provided. This promotes young people's progress. Therapists are a central part of the home's team. Their guidance helps young people to understand and manage difficult feelings and behaviours better. Therapists also assist staff in developing their understanding of young people's needs, which increases their abilities to respond to young people in the best way possible. Young people's care plans are extremely thoughtful and well-written records of each young person's progress. This is a real strength of this home.

The homely, welcoming environment is maintained to a very high standard. The layout and facilities allow for different areas of use, which the managers continually strive to improve. For example, a separate building in the grounds will become a therapy room for young people, providing a separate and confidential space.

Independence is promoted effectively. Staff continually support young people to be able to look after themselves, regardless of their age. Older children work through an independence package but staff look out for every opportunity to increase all young people's ability to care for themselves.

Young people's health needs are supported well. Staff are fully aware of the health services that each young person needs, and they link appropriately with these services. Staff regularly review health plans to ensure that these detailed records fully reflect young people's needs. Medical advice is sought swiftly when this is appropriate. This results in young people's health improving and increases young people's ability to lead a healthy lifestyle.

Contact with family and friends is promoted and supported very well. The staff encourage young people to develop friendships outside the home and to be part of the usual social activities that teenagers do, such as sleepovers at friends' houses.

Young people's views are sought regularly and are valued. However, feedback to young people about how their views are taken into consideration in the running of the home is not consistent. This is a missed opportunity to further demonstrate how the staff value and act on young people's opinions.

Young people usually move on in a planned way because of the progress that they have made. The staff prepare young people well for the changes of living somewhere else and celebrate with them their achievements and progress. Young people therefore make successful transitions to their next home.

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

A well-trained and knowledgeable staff team supports young people to keep themselves safe. Staff act appropriately when safeguarding concerns arise. They tenaciously follow up any information which raises concerns, including any information which places young people who live elsewhere at risk. Records demonstrate clearly the actions that staff have taken.

The staff know the young people exceptionally well. They work as a cohesive team in delivering consistent care and responses to behaviour. Staff help young people to understand themselves and their strengths and their difficulties effectively. For example, a member of staff quickly helped a young person to decrease their offensive language and increase their tolerance of a particular group of society.

Risk assessment forms part of everyday life here. Staff constantly work to identify, monitor and mitigate risks. They produce well-written risk assessments which cover each young person's needs and which they use to underpin the care that they provide. The location risk assessment includes all of the key local issues that are relevant to the home. However, greater interrogation of local crime statistics, which are relatively low, would provide staff with a clearer view of the nature of local crime and any relevance to the young people who live in the home.

Behaviour management is excellent. The staff successfully plan routines and care which assist young people to behave well. The staff are particularly adept at engaging young people in talking about difficult subjects. They take every opportunity that they can to help young people to reflect on things that occur, develop positive coping strategies and increase their resilience. This was clear in how staff protect and support young people's safety on the internet. Appropriate strategies support staff to appropriately monitor a young person's internet use. The strategies also assist the young person to develop their knowledge and understanding of the risks that the internet can pose.

Young people very rarely go missing; only one incident has occurred in the last year. The actions that staff took on this occasion, to continually search for the young person until their safe return, were exemplary and were commended by local safeguarding services.

Restraints occur rarely and only when this is needed. While some young people said that they did not like being restrained, they said that staff only did it when necessary. Records also show that the numbers of restraints have reduced significantly over time.

Recruitment practice is sound and, where possible, includes young people's views of applicants. The organisation has developed a national programme to speed up staff induction using a pre-assessment process to vet applicants at an early stage in the process. Managers base their interview on good practice principles, and this helps them to assess a person's motivation and resilience. These additional systems support the organisation to recruit the right people to look after young people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Highly effective leaders and managers continually learn from their experiences and take great pride in the excellent quality of care provided. The manager's six-monthly report provides an in-depth and realistic analysis of the challenges and successes that have occurred and recognises what may have impeded any developments. The report effectively reflects on how the team can continually improve in the coming months and provides a list of actions which inform the next development plan. For example, the manager changed induction processes to include a transition period for young people. This change supports the staff team to have even more opportunity to learn about the young person prior to admission.

Leaders and managers efficiently monitor the quality of the care provided. They frequently check how this continues to meet young people's needs and whether it is leading to positive changes in their lives. Senior managers regularly ask for views from all relevant people and agencies on their practice and disseminate and act on the results appropriately. Planned improvements include a separate space for young people to have therapy.

Effective teamwork is evident in all aspects of care and support to young people. There have been a number of changes to the staff team, including a change of manager. It is a credit to the home that these have not affected the quality of care provided. This year the provider has also innovatively developed a sessional team to cover staff absences, recruiting foster carers from the organisation's fostering service who wish to undertake work at the children's homes. This improves continuity of care for young people from staff who know the ways that the organisation operates and adhere to its values.

Supervisors are well trained, and undertake this task with confidence and skill. Supervision is used to strengthen the practice of staff and to improve the experiences of young people. In one instance, a member of staff was supported to manage a particularly difficult situation when a young person targeted him with negative behaviours. The support resulted in the relationship between the member of staff and the young person improving. It also resulted in a stronger safeguarding plan for the young person. This helped to reduce risk and supported the young person to develop better behaviours.

Staff learning and development is encouraged and facilitated. Training needs are quickly met, taking full account of children's needs. For example, one young person has recently been diagnosed with a learning disability. Training is being provided to the whole staff team to ensure that all team members are equipped to support this young person effectively. Staff are committed to each young person and demonstrate care in their approach to young people's individual needs. One young person said that the staff 'are always there for you and, while you may not like what they say, you know they care'.

Records provide an excellent account of how young people progress and of the care provided. Records are detailed and up to date. They demonstrate a continual curiosity in what young people's behaviours mean and how the staff team members can use their knowledge to help a child to progress further.

Good relationships with other professionals are built and maintained by the staff. They receive many compliments about the care even when a child's placement ended unexpectedly. The staff ably advocate for young people and vigorously chase any missing information which might affect young people's care.

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: 1250931

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Benjamin Jordan

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Ruth Coler, social care inspector

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