

1184093

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The children's home is managed by a private organisation. It provides care and accommodation for three young people of a single gender aged between 10 and 18 years who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 7 to 8 November 2017

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

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

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 January 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people who live at this home are settled, happy and want to remain in the home. They have good relationships with staff and with each other, which contributes to them feeling positive, secure and contented.
- From their point of placement, young people make very good progress in all areas. Progression is particularly evident in education, maturity, self-confidence and young people's ability to regulate their emotions.
- The home recognises the importance of family contact and helps young people develop and maintain positive relationships with family and friends, supporting and supervising this where necessary.
- Young people become increasingly independent during their placement. Staff understand their needs for independence and free time, and manage the risks associated with these well.
- Risk-taking behaviours reduce significantly from young people's starting points. Safeguarding incidents are very rare.
- Young people do not go missing from the home because they have strong, positive relationships with staff and respect the boundaries in place.
- Risks are understood for young people. There are plans in place to address areas of risk that are individual and specific to young people. For example, one young person is highly vulnerable in the community and his missing from home profile stipulates that police should be called immediately in the event of him going missing.
- Staff are skilled in understanding and managing incidents of escalated behaviour. They do not use restrictive physical intervention to manage challenging behaviour because they have the skills to de-escalate and calm young people without resorting to physical means.
- The home is managed effectively and efficiently by an enthusiastic and committed manager who has high aspirations for young people.
- The staff team is generally stable and most team members are qualified and experienced. This enables the young people to form close and secure relationships, which contributes to them feeling cared about, happy and settled in the home.
- Strong links with other agencies ensures a joined-up approach to caring for the young people and ensuring that all their needs are met.

The children's home's areas for development:

- When young people complain, their complaint should be recorded in the home's complaints log to ensure the complaint is logged, as well as any action taken in response and the outcome of the complaint.

- Some deficiencies were noted in the home's record keeping with incorrect or insufficient information recorded in young people's plans and risk assessments.
- The staff team is entirely male except for one waking night member of staff. This does not ensure that young people receive fully balanced care and have the opportunity to form close and positive relationships with carers of both genders.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
04/07/2016	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 maintain records ("case records") for each child which— are kept up to date. Specifically this relates to children's risk assessments having the correct risks identified and placement plans recording accurate information about children's contact arrangements and legal status. (Regulation 36 (1)((b) and (c))	6/12/2017
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))	6/12/2017

Recommendations

- Whenever possible, staff in day-to-day contact with children should include staff from the different gender groups. Where the home's statement of purpose makes it explicit that the home uses staff of one sex only, clear guidance will need to be in place and followed as to how children are enabled to maintain relationships with people of a different gender.
(‘Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 54, paragraph 10.22)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people at this home benefit from settled and stable placements. The three young people who live in the home have lived there for more than a year and have developed close relationships with staff and positive relationships with each other. Young people spoken to reported they were happy with every aspect of the home and the care they receive, and did not wish to change anything. Observations of interactions between young people and staff evidenced close, warm and supportive relationships, which were characterised by mutual respect and understanding. Young people reported they wanted to remain in this placement until independence. One young person declined an

opportunity to move closer to his family and into semi-independence to remain in the home so that he could further his education and improve his future career prospects.

Progression for young people is remarkable, particularly in the areas of developing maturity, regulating behaviour, education, confidence and social skills.

Young people are encouraged to be individual, and have developed interests and hobbies that are supported by staff. For example, one young person has developed an interest in aeroplanes after experiencing his first flight in the summer holidays, and is now regularly taken to an airport to view the planes.

Staff understand the importance of contact with family and friends. Some young people have daily contact with their family, and the home supports this through transportation and very regular communication with family members. Parents spoken to as part of this inspection were highly positive about the care their children receive, and feel that their children's future life chances have dramatically improved as a result of being placed in the home. Other young people are helped to have regular contact with friends and to manage free time. For one young person this is significant progress because, at the point of placement, he could not keep himself safe in the community.

From their point of placement, young people's attendance and engagement with education greatly improves. All young people are attending and enjoying education, and have made significant progress in this area. The home has developed strong links with young people's schools to ensure positive communication, and a joined-up approach is in place to provide young people with support and consistency.

Young people are very healthy. They follow a healthy diet and are involved in physical activity on a regular basis. Where necessary, they are helped to improve personal hygiene and take care of their personal appearance. All young people have access to weekly therapeutic support, which some make full use of. While others do not want to engage in direct therapeutic work, the therapist is creative and tenacious in developing relationships with all young people to enable them to be supported therapeutically. Staff also benefit from very regular training by the therapist so that they are skilled in delivering care based on a therapeutic model.

Young people express views informally about their care on a daily basis. There are also more formal systems in place, such as young people's meetings and key-worker sessions, to ensure that young people have opportunities to voice their opinions. Young people are supported to attend and even chair some meetings in respect of their care planning. Young people state they feel listened to and involved in decisions in the home. One example of this is their planning of the summer holiday abroad, where they chose the location, accommodation and activities. This also gave young people an opportunity to develop their independence skills by planning and organising the holiday themselves with some support from staff.

Young people know how to complain and feel that they will be listened to if they do complain. One young person made a complaint which was dealt with to his satisfaction.

However, this was not recorded as a complaint within the home's complaints log, which is an oversight and has resulted in a requirement being made.

Young people have their own placement plans, which are child-centred, provide basic information and are easy to understand. Their main placement plan is a detailed and lengthy document providing extensive information about the young person. Some records sampled did not contain full information about young people's current contact arrangements and one recorded the young person's legal status incorrectly, which results in a further requirement being made.

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

From their starting points, young people make exceptional progress in respect of reducing their risks. Some young people have high levels of anger and aggression at the point of placement, others are high risk in the community, are involved in criminal activity and drug misuse, and others had multiple placement breakdowns with missing episodes being a contributory factor. All of the above risks have reduced for the young people placed, and they do not present any of the dangerous behaviours they were presenting prior to placement.

There have been no missing from home episodes since the last full inspection. Some young people have daily contact with family members and others have daily contact with friends in the community, which is carefully risk assessed and risk-managed. These freedoms contribute to young people not wanting or needing to go missing. They are aware of, and respect, the boundaries around contact and free time, and return on time. Each young person has a missing from home profile, which is individualised. One young person is highly vulnerable in the community and his profile clearly states that he should be reported immediately to the police should he go missing. The profile also usefully gives some details as to how he may present socially and behaviourally. This profile would be immediately emailed to the police should he go missing, and they would therefore be aware of his individual presentation.

As stated above, one young person is vulnerable in the community. This risk is understood and addressed by staff. The other young people are aware of his vulnerability and are sensitive to his needs. Young people are encouraged and supported to be very tolerant of each other and achieve this despite some clear challenges to this.

Staff are extremely skilled at behaviour management. They understand young people and are aware of the subtle changes which may mean that the young people are struggling in some areas. They address challenging behaviour in a supportive way, and encourage discussion after incidents to help young people reflect and learn. Some young people have unique ways of expressing their worries and concerns, and staff have developed specific techniques to manage this and to help each young person to be accountable for his behaviour.

There have been no incidents of restrictive physical intervention since the last full inspection and very few incidents of challenging behaviour. This evidences the strength

of the relationships that staff have with young people and the respect that young people have for boundaries and rules. Young people report the rules and boundaries to be clear and fair; they understand any consequences that are in place. Sanctions are rarely used and staff focus on a system of rewarding positive behaviour, which is evidently effective.

Allegations are dealt with in line with the home's policies and procedures. The home works in partnership with external agencies, such as young people's social workers and the local area designated officer, to ensure a clear multi-agency response to any allegations made. Where it is appropriate to do so, the home holds resolution meetings to ensure that relationships are mended and young people have the opportunity to express their views.

Although none of the young people placed in this home are considered high risk in respect of radicalisation and extremism, staff help them to be informed about events in the news and have discussions around issues such as radicalisation as they arise naturally in conversation. All staff have completed training around radicalisation and extremism, and would therefore be aware of any risks in these areas.

All young people have risk assessments, which identify their individual risks and strategies to manage or reduce risk. One young person's risk assessment had recently been updated and contained incorrect information about his areas of risk, which had not been deleted from the template risk assessment. Discussions with staff evidenced they were aware of this young person's specific risks and understood what steps were in place to manage risks. Therefore, the issue is a recording issue rather than a safeguarding issue.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home has a new manager in post who has recently been registered by the regulator. He is motivated to provide young people with a very high level of care and achieve the best possible outcomes for them. He communicates this clearly to the staff team and expects a high standard of care to be delivered to young people.

The manager fully understands the progression of young people and takes pride in the significant progress they have all made to date. He is highly positive about young people, the home and the staff team, which results in an upbeat and positive atmosphere in the home.

The staff team is relatively stable and most team members are experienced and qualified. Those who are not yet qualified are enrolled on the NVQ level 3 course. The staff team is comprised of male staff, with the exception of one female night practitioner. As the home provides care for single gender young people (male) only, this creates a highly masculine environment. The addition of more female staff would provide the young people with positive female role models as well as more balanced care. This is therefore made as a recommendation for good practice.

There is an extensive training programme in place, which includes several courses that

have to be completed prior to working with children and further courses to complete within the first six months of employment. Staff receive regular training in a variety of areas and are trained regularly by the psychotherapist allocated to the home who attends team meetings and puts on training events. Training is often individualised and specific to young people and their individual therapy and care needs, which ensures that the right support is delivered to each young person.

Staff report they feel supported through regular supervision and annual appraisal. The manager is visible in the home on a daily basis and is very involved in the delivery of day-to-day care to the young people and daily informal support for staff.

The manager is particularly good at ensuring regular communication with young people's families and external agencies involved in their care. Any complaints made by family members are dealt with effectively and efficiently with a clear outcome. Social workers and families report that the home communicates with them frequently and effectively, and are highly positive about how the home is managed and care is delivered.

The home delivers care in line with its statement of purpose, and the therapeutic care described in the statement of purpose is clearly implemented in the day-to-day care young people receive.

The home is furnished and decorated to a good standard downstairs, and feels welcoming and homely. Some issues identified regarding the upstairs bathroom and hallway had already been identified by the manager, and a date was provided for the necessary work to be completed. Young people have recently had their bedrooms re-painted and have had new mattresses.

Young people's views clearly inform the development of the home and the care they receive. The young people each have their own development plan, which runs alongside the home's development plan. The manager has effective monitoring systems in place and makes good use of external monitoring visits and reports. He has full understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses, and is enthusiastic about continuous development and improvement of the home.

Managers actively promote tolerance, equality and diversity. Young people show amazing tolerance of one another, and this is role modelled by staff. They are supported to develop their involvement in their culture and religion, although are not pushed if they do not wish to practice. One young person has Italian heritage. Staff frequently prepare Italian food, and he has information about his cultural heritage within his placement plan. Staff also offered to help him paint his bedroom in Italian flag colours, although he changed his mind.

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: 1184093

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 49 Whitegate Drive, Blackpool, Lancashire FY3 9DG

Responsible individual: Lee Prescott

Registered manager: Matthew Livingstone

Inspector

Charlie Bamber, social care inspector

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