

1214266

Registered provider: Platform Childcare Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately run children's home that can cater for up to four young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The registered manager is registered for two of the company's homes.

Inspection dates: 17 to 18 January 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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: 18 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 outstanding because:

- The manager and staff provide consistent, nurturing care that is highly effective. Young people, who have previously experienced several placement moves, are supported to feel more stable and secure. This significantly improves young people's life chances.
- The very dedicated and competent staff demonstrate an admirable commitment to young people in their care. Staff work incredibly hard with a range of other agencies in order to secure improved outcomes for young people. Feedback from all agencies working with the home is extremely positive.
- From their starting points, young people have made exceptional progress in their education. Educational placements are secured soon after admission because the manager is proactive and assertive in advocating for young people. The staff ensure that educational placements are supported. They are highly effective in supporting educational placements when there is a risk of breakdown.
- A holistic approach is very evident in care planning. The manager has introduced a resilience-practice model, based on up-to-date research. This has improved staff induction, training and supervision. The model has helped the staff to work consistently and to improve outcomes for the young people.
- Young people are supported to become increasingly safe. This is demonstrated though a significant reduction in incidents of young people going missing, self-harming and displaying challenging behaviours. Young people form very positive relationships with staff. Staff understand young people's needs, risks and histories. Young people are supported to feel secure to a point where they are able to commence life-story work and to address historical trauma.
- Young people work with staff closely to achieve their goals. Staff are very good at helping young people to take pride in their personal achievements. All young people are supported to engage in extra-curricular activities. This improves the young people's self-esteem, confidence and emotional well-being.
- The manager is inspirational and demonstrates a real passion for improving young people's outcomes. The staff team shares this ethos. Staff understand the difficulties faced by children looked after and act as strong advocates for them. Staff challenge placing authorities and other agencies to ensure that young people's needs are prioritised.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
10/05/2016	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30) This is in relation to having a central record of return interviews offered and achieved.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people make exceptional progress. Staff implement an innovative model of care. This helps them to provide a nurturing and extremely supportive environment for young people.

Young people's achievements are celebrated. All young people lead active lives and take part in a wide range of activities. This improves their emotional well-being and self-esteem. One young person who had found it very difficult to cope in social situations now attends school daily, walks to school independently, has attended swimming lessons and attends a regular dance class. The young person said, 'Staff have helped me to do activities that I didn't like doing before. They help me with homework, help me when I'm upset and they make sure I get to school.' In addition, young people are supported to attend after-school activities. This further enhances their confidence, self-esteem, social skills and relationships.

The home's book club is a good example of how young people are helped to engage in positive activities. Young people are encouraged to choose a favourite book and read to each other as a small group. All young people engage with this weekly activity.

The progress that young people make is assessed at regular intervals. The entire staff

team is involved in initial and ongoing assessments and contributes to the development of care plans. Stakeholder feedback is exceptional. For example, the police, social workers, teachers and family support workers all say that the staff and managers are exceptional. A representative from the police stated, 'This home is at the top of the tree as a children's home.'

One young person had eleven placement moves prior to moving to this home. He remained at the home for 14 months, the longest period in any one placement. His social worker said, 'The behaviours could be highly challenging. The young person engaged in education full time and was supported exceptionally well at times when his educational placement was at risk.' His eventual move from the home was managed very well. The social worker confirmed that, 'Staff stuck by him in the most difficult circumstances where a lot of homes would have given notice much sooner.'

Young people generally have longer-term placements at this home because the staff are very resilient and stabilise behaviours well. One staff member said, 'Whatever behaviours we are faced with, we will tackle them, and work flexibly to make changes.'

Young people's health needs are met to a high standard. Health promotion work is highly effective. One young person has been supported to lose a significant amount of weight. Another young person has stopped smoking within a month of moving to the home. All young people are supported to access regular emotional health services. The manager recognises that this is a vital part of the care plan for young people.

All young people's attendance in education has improved significantly. A teacher said, 'Staff work above and beyond to support young people's education. Communication has been excellent. The young person was very, very challenging and the home and school worked really well together to maintain his educational placement.' She went on to say that the young person 'went from a very angry, unhappy child to a more confident, happy and thriving child, a different child to the one who joined the school'.

Young people have a number of avenues to express any concerns, wishes and feelings. Key-work sessions are used very well to support young people to become emotionally resilient and express their emotions in a constructive manner. The manager ensures that any complaints are responded to in a timely manner. Young people can access advocacy support if they wish to do so.

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

Staff work tirelessly to ensure that young people are safe. Highly effective risk assessments contribute to reductions in risk-taking behaviours. Risk-management plans are thorough and regularly reviewed. Incidents of young people going missing from the home, self-harm and violence reduce greatly over time. Young people feel safe in the home. They reflect openly on previous behaviours and are helped to develop their own strategies to reduce their vulnerabilities.

Staff recognise the individual triggers that lead to challenging behaviour, angry

outbursts, self-harm and running away. They take effective action to support young people to manage their emotions in a constructive manner. Staff manage challenging behaviour confidently. A strength of the home is the cohesiveness of the staff team and the consistency in its implementation of behaviour management strategies.

The manager and staff take bullying very seriously. All young people have attended a workshop on bullying run by a specialist charity. One young person was particularly engaging at the workshop and was invited back to attend a residential conference. This input has helped the young person to grow in self-confidence.

Recruitment and selection procedures are excellent. Management oversight at all levels reflects a total commitment to ensuring that only the most suitable adults are employed to work in the home. Safeguarding is central to the induction and training programme, and the staff team demonstrates a shared commitment to a strong safeguarding ethos.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is led by a strong and experienced manager. She is well supported by the deputy managers. Together, the management team provides confident, inspirational and ambitious leadership to the home. A social worker said that the manager 'is a credit to the agency she works for, and she is just brilliant'.

Managers know the strengths and weakness of the home and act quickly to address any shortfalls. The monitoring and review of care plans are exceptional. This enables managers to clearly demonstrate the progress that young people make.

Staff feel highly valued as part of a cohesive team. Staff retention and stability are excellent. The manager has a robust staff development plan, which ensures that each member of the team has the skills and knowledge to provide excellent care. The induction programme for new staff members is comprehensive. The manager has also been proactive in arranging for staff to attend training provided by the local child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS). This helps staff to understand and address all emotional and mental health needs.

Staff supervision and team meetings are structured, take place regularly and are well recorded. Staff feel able to share their experiences. They seek out opportunities to develop their practice, learn from their mistakes and improve their knowledge.

Working collaboratively with other agencies is a strength of this home. There are close working relationships with social workers, police, CAMHS and other agencies. Staff and managers understand their professional responsibilities, as well as those of other agencies. Staff advocate strongly for young people and are confident to challenge other agencies when necessary to ensure that young people have access to the services that they need. The manager works proactively to develop good multi-agency work. For example, she has requested a regular forum for the local police's missing from home coordinator and local children's home's managers to meet. The police have agreed to this, and are in the process of setting this group up.

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: 1214266

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Platform Childcare Ltd

Registered provider address: Suite 32, Anglesey Business Centre, Anglesey Road,
Burton-on-Trent DE14 3NT

Responsible individual: Zamir Lal

Registered manager: Andrea Spurr

Inspector

Bev Allison, social care inspector

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