

1183574

Registered provider: Cheshire West and Chester Council

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is provided by a local authority and is registered to provide care and accommodation to four young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection date: 31 January 2018

Judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Date of last inspection: 20 June 2017

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged outstanding at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.

Since the last inspection in June 2017, the resident group has changed with two new young people living at the home replacing two leavers. The transitions for the two leavers were suitably managed with carefully planned and implemented programmes, which enabled the young people to join their supported living services feeling involved and informed.

Mostly, the two new placements have been well planned, and staff have gained a positive level of knowledge and understanding relating to each young person prior to, and during, the transitional stages of the placement. However, the demands on one young person in relation to extensive travel to their school placement were not sufficiently considered at admission and the means of transport were not clarified. This

means that the young person was waiting for transport before 7.30am each school morning which on occasion did not arrive and they have since disengaged with school.

The second new young person has quickly established a positive school routine and is enjoying the new placement and commends the support that they receive from the staff, who they see as friendly but firm. Staff are consistently supporting this young person to actively pursue a college placement. The two young people who have been in placement since the last inspection continue to make good progress.

Care practice in the home in relation to episodes of going missing, complaints and risk management is robust and in line with statutory guidance and in-house policy. However, there are recording shortfalls within these three areas. While the shortfalls do not impact negatively on the outcomes for young people, they do inhibit the manager's ability to track for any patterns and trends in young people's behaviour. For example, the Regulation 44 visitor reports that there has been one complaint since the last inspection, while the registered manager reports in her Regulation 45 report that there have been no complaints. On analysis at the inspection, this appears to be based upon a different interpretation of the issue's status as a concern or a complaint.

For one young person, pre-placement missing behaviour has continued. The home's response has been robust and timely, with appropriate action at the time of the episodes and an intervention meeting with the placing social worker to review the incidents. This means that the young person is receiving the support that they need to address their missing behaviour. Recording in this area needs addressing as records do not distinguish between those episodes that are classed as missing or absent from home. This feature is required by statutory guidance and internal policy.

The home's quality monitoring is timely and detailed. However, currently, there are gaps in the manager's internal monitoring processes. The monitoring report does not clearly include feedback regarding the quality of the service from professionals connected to the home. This reduces the level of independent feedback available to the manager to inform her quality review.

Since the last inspection, there have been no episodes of restraint in the home. The home uses appropriate and proportionate sanctions to help young people to manage their behaviour. While risk assessments are clear and regularly reviewed, one in relation to managing the risk of substance misuse and staff monitoring of the young person after the incident, does not fully specify the control measures that staff should use. The instruction to staff to 'monitor the young person', is open to different interpretation and implementation by staff, which provides an inconsistent response to the young person whose health is at risk. In practice, the level of post-incident monitoring is high and effective, but a clearer description of risk control measures will help to promote consistency after every such episode.

There were two recommendations arising from the last Ofsted inspection, and both have been met. New paperwork has been implemented in order to strengthen recording and better evidence the home's direct work with young people. The leadership team also

audits daily records on a more regular basis and evidences any issues and progress in team meetings and staff supervision sessions. Staff have completed training which focused on the key principles of record-keeping, which they are beginning to use to inform and improve their practice in this area.

The second recommendation regarding the provision of a computer for the group has been met. The staff team arranged for young people to access the office computer before the replacement computer was in place, to ensure that educational work could be completed as required.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/06/2017	Full	Outstanding
27/09/2016	Full	Requires improvement
15/06/2016	Full	Inadequate

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
<p>The registered person must prepare and implement a policy (“the missing child policy”) setting out—</p> <p>(a) the steps taken, and to be taken, to prevent children from being absent without permission; and</p> <p>(b) the procedures to be followed, and the roles and responsibilities of persons working at the home, in relation to a child who is, or has been, so absent. (Regulation 34 (4)(a)(b))</p> <p>With particular regard to ensuring that the home’s records clearly distinguish between incidents of going missing and being absent from the home.</p>	28/03/2018

Recommendations

- Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4). With particular regard to ensuring that the home's records detail concerns and complaints separately in line with the internal policy.
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5). With particular regard to ensuring that where the risk assessment refers to substance misuse and specifies that the control measures are to monitor the young person that the action plan clarifies for staff the means of monitoring the young person.
- It is essential that homes understand what will be required of them before they accept responsibility for a child's placement, to avoid disruption and instability for the child in the future ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.5). With particular regard to ensuring that at admission, the home's actions required by individual personal education plans and education, care and health plans are feasible, especially in relation to the school transport arrangements and times for travel to school and the demands on young people.
- The registered person should oversee the welfare of the children in their care through observation and engagement with the professionals involved in the care or protection of each child including their social worker, independent reviewing officer, teachers, clinicians and other health professionals. (Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.23)

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.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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: 1183574

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cheshire West and Chester Council

Registered provider address: 58 Nicholas Street, Chester CH1 2NP

Responsible individual: Sophie Wales

Registered manager: Genevieve Raw

Inspector

Karen Forster, regulatory inspection manager

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