

1183574

Registered provider: Cheshire West and Chester Council

Full 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 for up to four young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The registered manager has been in post since February 2017.

Inspection dates: 30 to 31 October 2018

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: 31 January 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/01/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
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 may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if—</p> <p>(a) the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children;</p> <p>(b) the child’s placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance;</p> <p>(c) so far as is reasonably practicable in the light of the child’s age and understanding, the child is informed in advance of the intention to do the monitoring and surveillance; and</p> <p>(d) the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child’s need for privacy.</p> <p>(Regulation 24 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d))</p> <p>In particular, bedroom door alarms should only be used when assessed as necessary for individual young people and with appropriate consent.</p>	<p>03/12/2018</p>

Recommendations

- 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. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 64, paragraph 15.1). Particular regard should be given to including risks presented in the home’s locality that may be of a temporary nature.
- The registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 61, paragraph 13.1) In particular, where recruitment records are not maintained at the home, summary records of the vetting and recruitment checks of staff should be maintained, to evidence that the manager is satisfied that all staff working at the home are fit to do so and that recruitment and selection arrangements comply with the relevant regulations.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people thrive in the home. They benefit from the exceptionally high-quality and consistent care provided by staff. Most young people make exceptional progress from their starting points. Some young people now enjoy overnight stays with family members, and one young person's care plan had been changed to consider rehabilitation back to a family member.

Three young people have achieved GCSE qualifications since the last inspection. A representative of the virtual school noted that the close working relationships and support from the home were instrumental in young people's success. Two young people have successfully moved on to semi-independent accommodation. One of these young people participates in interviews for the recruitment of local authority staff.

Young people enjoy a range of opportunities that support their development and increase their confidence. During the inspection, a young person went shopping with their own budget in preparation for her future independence. She achieved beyond professional expectations in her GSCE exams and is now studying for A levels. Her growing self-reliance has been further encouraged so that she travels independently.

Young people enjoy good and improving physical and emotional health. All attend their routine check-ups and any medication is administered with robust recording and checks in place. Young people's views are respected regarding their attendance at appointments to support emotional and mental health. Where they choose not to attend, the home maintains open communication with the relevant professionals, which enables young people to re-engage with mental health practitioners at a later stage. Staff accessed training with the local authority's adoption team to support existing knowledge and skills of how adoption breakdowns may impact on young people's attachments and development.

One young person's placement ended because he was at risk if he remained in the locality. Despite all efforts to disrupt unhealthy associations, his challenging behaviour escalated to an extent that put himself and others at risk. Through the patience and resilience of the staff team, and careful planning, a more suitable placement was identified, while continuing to encourage his engagement as far as possible in the interim. Some positive outcomes were achieved, such as maintaining some attendance at school, achieving rewards, such as activities for set incentives, and recommencing medication to help regulate his emotions and sleep patterns. When he moved, he was accompanied by staff in preference to travelling by secure transportation.

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

Great care is taken to understand specific risks for young people, and admissions are accepted only when all relevant information has been received. This means that staff are

fully prepared and can respond appropriately to protect young people from the point of their arrival. Careful consideration is given to the impact of any young person on those who already live at the home.

Young people said they feel safe. This is because staff know them well and understand their individual needs, giving young people the confidence to be open about any concerns they have.

Highly trained staff understand safeguarding risks that may affect young people, including any emerging national concerns such as 'county lines'. They are proactive when young people's safety is of concern. For example, when young people go missing they consider the use of harbouring notices. Appropriate checks are made so that staff are satisfied that young people can visit friends safely. Unsuitable associations are actively discouraged, and staff do all they can to offer meaningful activities to disrupt negative relationships.

Young people respond positively to praise and incentives, and their behaviour significantly improves. Records show that they are compassionate and caring towards one another and towards the staff team. Two young people made the same complaint that another young person had behaved unacceptably, and that this behaviour had impacted on both of them and the staff. In addressing the complaint, they were encouraged to reflect on their own behaviour in the past and the progress they had made. Although this did not immediately resolve the complaint for the young people, it encouraged them to develop further their empathy for others and rebuild relationships.

Staff use de-escalation skills very effectively so that physical intervention is rarely required. Since the last inspection, there has been one occasion when physical intervention has been required to prevent harm. This was appropriately recorded, and thorough debriefs took place with the staff and young person.

Staff manage challenging behaviour well. They are extremely conscious that young people should not be criminalised and use restorative practice to resolve damaged relationships, either between young people or with people outside of the home.

The team members attend training and seek advice from health professionals to support young people to reduce self-harming behaviours. Staff include young people in developing their own safety plans, helping to develop less harmful strategies to manage their mental and emotional well-being.

Bedroom door alarms have been used routinely in the home, without written consent from placing social workers. Young people are aware of the alarms and there has been no impact on young people's outcomes with their use. However, the door alarms are used generically with the group, when some young people would not require the measure. The registered manager took immediate action during the inspection to make amendments to the home's statement of purpose, develop a risk assessment and devise consent forms.

The home has a locality risk assessment that identifies risks in the area where the home is situated. However, this has not been updated to reflect temporary risks, such as addresses that young people might gravitate towards that are considered unsuitable. All staff were aware of the potential concerns; therefore, this shortfall did not compromise the young person's safety.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

A highly skilled, committed and stable team is led by a registered manager and deputy manager who have a vision for continued improvement in children's lives. Staff benefit from high-quality, reflective supervision which they value and this supports their continued professional development. The one member of staff yet to complete a suitable qualification is enrolled to do so.

Staff access training regularly to support their development and improve competency in their roles. They use research to inform their practice, including dyadic developmental practice. This provides a framework for therapeutic intervention to support young people to recover from trauma and enables staff to maintain positive relationships while managing challenging behaviour.

The resilience of the team, even during challenging periods, is reflected in the low turnover of staff. This continuity promotes young people's attachments, which is further reflected in ongoing positive contact after young people move on. Staff spoke of young people with pride, they feel supported by their managers and describe their job 'as one of the best ever'. Young people were observed to have warm, trusting and relaxed relationships with staff. One young person told the inspector she could not think of anything she would want to change about the home, that she feels listened to, and that if she was inspecting her home she would judge it 'outstanding'.

Young people are central to all planning in the home and they are consulted individually each month. This gives them the opportunity to reflect on their own progress, set goals, and make suggestions for the home, menu and activities. Monthly themes are included, such as healthy eating, in addition to any individual direct work. Regular team meetings allow collective reflection on the progress made by young people, as well as the opportunity to reflect on more challenging times, to learn from experiences and to discuss how to move forward.

The home has well-established links with a wide range of professionals and services involved in young people's lives. Parents and professionals who work with the young people spoke very highly of the home. One social worker said the home communicates very well and that staff 'go above and beyond' in supporting a young person. An education professional said that staff had been 'brilliant with [name of young person]' and that she 'couldn't fault them', commenting on how strongly they had challenged her in advocating the young person's wishes and feelings about school. Another education professional described the home as a 'model for partnership working'.

Highly effective use is made of independent and internal monitoring of the home. This

means that the manager has a very good understanding of the strengths and areas of development of the home. She is quick to address any issues that arise and creates a proactive culture in the home.

Recruitment processes are confirmed to be robust by the manager, and she is actively involved in ensuring that all staff are suitable to work with vulnerable individuals. Staff recruitment files are held by the local authority's human resources department and a summary is held in the home. This summary needs to be improved to clearly evidence that all checks are complete.

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: 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: Judith Griffith

Registered manager: Genevieve Raw

Inspector

Karen Willson, social care inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2018