

1223681

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a private children's home registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four girls, at any given time, who are experiencing emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 4 to 5 December 2018

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 6 March 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/03/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
08/05/2017	Full	Good
08/11/2016	Full	Requires improvement

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

Recommendations

- The behaviour management strategy should be understood and applied at all times by staff, and must be kept under review and revised where appropriate. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.34)
- The policy on protection of children from abuse and neglect should include arrangements in relation to dealing with allegations involving staff in the home, e-safety and to counter risks of self-harm and suicide. All policies should be reviewed regularly and revised where appropriate. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.19)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people living at this home enjoy exceptionally strong and close bonds with staff. This has a positive impact on all areas of their lives, and particularly on their ability and willingness to moderate their behaviour and to comply with the reasonable and fair routines and boundaries that are in place.

Young people reported that the home feels like a family home to them and believe that staff genuinely care for them. This benefits their sense of self-worth, which in turn improves their confidence and self-esteem. Staff were observed to be warm and affectionate towards the girls, which was reciprocated. Three of the four young people living at the home have been settled in their placement for a considerable time. The fourth is newly admitted and is showing early signs of settling and, while the inspection was taking place, positively referred to the placement as 'home'.

All young people have good attendance at school or college and understand the importance of education. Young people are encouraged to plan for their futures and some have high career aspirations. Prior to coming to live at the home, some young people had poor attendance and limited engagement in education. One young person is very proud to have been selected to be head girl at her school.

Young people feel confident to express their opinions and views about their care. They are supported particularly well in preparing for, and playing a major role in, their own looked after child review. Staff also ensure, after the review has taken place, that young people understand the decisions that are made at the review. This helps to ensure that young people feel listened to and that they understand the plans in place for their futures. The documentation in the home clearly evidences young people's opinions being sought in a wide variety of ways, and young people's gatherings are a highly positive example of participation.

There is a strong focus on celebrating achievements, however small they may be. Young people's daily memories books record something positive about each young person's day every single day. Young people are encouraged to take pride in their achievements, and their successes are clearly documented to provide evidence of progress. A particular strength of the home is the celebration of each young person's individuality. Young people are encouraged to pursue their own interests, which include art, music, drama, hair and beauty and running. Staff show genuine interest in their hobbies and reinforce their unique talents.

Some young people are starting to prepare to live independently. Staff take a balanced approach to developing their skills in order to ensure that they continue to feel nurtured. Some young people now successfully budget and shop for their own food, prepare most of their own meals and use public transport.

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

From their point of placement, young people's risks significantly reduce. Missing from home, drug and alcohol issues, their ability to safely manage emotions and their capacity to develop positive relationships all improve. Young people themselves reported that they feel safe. Risks are clearly identified in young people's risk assessments as well as strategies to manage and minimise those risks. Staff spoken to understand the pertinent risks for individual young people and the steps that they must take to minimise the risks.

Missing from home incidents are infrequent. Each young person has a clear missing from home protocol and, on the occasions when young people have gone missing, these have been implemented and adhered to. Records of missing from home incidents are clear and concise. They show that the staff try to contact and locate the young people and work alongside the police. Independent return home interviews are always offered.

External agencies are involved in managing risk for young people when their risks necessitate this. One young person has successfully addressed an alcohol issue with support from Addaction. Specialist child sexual exploitation workers have also undertaken work with young people who are identified as being at potential risk. Staff work hard to educate young people in risk management, and there are clear records of these conversations. Other means of education are also employed, such as work sheets, television dramas, quizzes and inviting the local police community support officers into the home to educate the girls in criminality awareness.

Relationships between young people are generally very positive. On the occasions when this is not the case, staff work hard to educate young people about bullying. There are bullying contracts in place and bullying is addressed through the young persons' meetings. Staff also engage the young people in some very good restorative work to help restore and maintain positive relationships.

Restrictive physical intervention is used only rarely. This is because staff are good at understanding and avoiding triggers as well as managing and de-escalating situations before they reach a point when a physical intervention would be necessary. There has been one occasion when a restrictive physical intervention became necessary due to staff not implementing rules about the use of the wi-fi system consistently. A recommendation has been made to address this. A further recommendation is made relating to the recording of physical interventions because one record reviewed did not clearly evidence why the intervention was necessary or proportionate.

The home has recently admitted a young person who is prescribed controlled medication. The medication is stored securely, and there is a clear and safe procedure for its administration.

Some young people use self-harm as a coping mechanism. They have developed such positive relationships with staff that, in most instances, they feel they can approach staff to tell them that they feel low and seek support before they get to the point of self-harm. The home has a ligature knife and staff are trained in suicide and self-harm awareness in the eventuality of a serious incident.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home has experienced a change of manager since its last inspection. The new manager is not yet registered with the regulator and does not yet have the level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare (England), although is hoping to have completed this by early 2019.

Staff and young people alike have responded positively to the change in managers. Young people reported that they have a close relationship with the manager, and staff indicated that they feel supported and that the home is well managed. The new manager is enthusiastic and motivated to provide the highest possible quality of care to young people and leadership to the staff team. Staff feel that there is an inclusive ethos, and that their knowledge and suggestions are valued.

Senior managers are regularly present in the home and are therefore visible and available to staff and young people. The manager has considerable knowledge of the individual young people and a good understanding of the procedures and processes required to manage the home effectively. She makes good use of external monitoring and has good arrangements in place for internal monitoring of the home.

There have been two incidents of allegations and whistleblowing relating to managers.

The process for dealing with these incidents has not been entirely consistent, and one incident had a degree of delay and mis-communication between senior managers in the company. This was due to there being no clear line of accountability for the management of whistleblowing allegations. This is recognised by senior managers, and a clearer process is now in place to ensure that one manager has overall oversight and responsibility for managing and coordinating whistleblowing or allegations against a manager. The home had involved the designated officer as appropriate, and the allegations did not relate to safeguarding issues. Therefore, this issue is to be addressed through a good-practice recommendation.

One placement has ended since the home's last inspection. The young person went to extensive lengths to break down relationships before she left, which resulted in a difficult time for staff and young people. Although there are no concerns relating to the way in which any individual incidents were managed, the breakdown of this placement did have a negative impact to some degree on the staff and young people.

The home has previously experienced some difficulties in matching a fourth young person to the three girls who have been placed together for a significant length of time. The manager has undertaken a very careful matching process, which has involved a longer transition and more input from the young people who were already resident. This appears to have been successful, and the most recent admission has settled well and started to develop positive relationships with the other young people. This was evident during the inspection when an older young person gave the newer resident a hug when she was upset.

A particular strength of the home is its approach to working with partner agencies. Much of the success in getting all young people into full-time education is attributable in part to the frequency of communication between staff at the home and the young people's education provision. Social workers and independent reviewing officers consulted during the inspection spoke very highly about the level of communication and cooperative working they have with them home.

The quality of recording is high and records are well organised. In particular, key working sessions are recorded in detail and notable achievement records clearly evidence progress made by young people.

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: 1223681

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: Post vacant

Inspector

Charlie Bamber, social care inspector

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