

1240883

Registered provider: Care 4 Children

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a private organisation. It provides care and accommodation for up to three young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The registered manager left the service in February 2019. The new manager's application to register with Ofsted is ongoing.

Inspection dates: 29 to 30 May 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 5 June 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/06/2018	Full	Good
03/10/2017	Full	Good
15/05/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
02/02/2017	Full	Requires improvement

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; protect and promote each child's welfare; and treat each child with dignity and respect. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(b)(i)(ii)(iii))</p>	31/07/2019
<p>* The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;</p> <p>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;</p>	03/07/2019

<p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; and</p> <p>that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi) and (vii)(b))</p>	
<p>* The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;</p> <p>encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;</p> <p>help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship;</p> <p>understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children;</p>	<p>03/07/2019</p>

<p>are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same; and</p> <p>de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children.</p> <p>(Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(vii)(ix)(x) and (xi))</p>	
<p>*The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; and</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(c)(e)(f) and (h))</p>	<p>03/07/2019</p>
<p>The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>develop positive relationships with them;</p> <p>engage with them; and</p> <p>take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p>	<p>31/07/2019</p>

<p>ensure that the views of each relevant person are taken into account, so far as reasonably practicable, before making a decision about the care or welfare of a child. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(e))</p>	
<p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to achieve the child’s education and training targets, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans;</p> <p>understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;</p> <p>help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; and</p> <p>help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child’s relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1)(2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)(x))</p>	<p>31/07/2019</p>
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home’s statement of purpose and that arrangements are in place to—</p> <p>ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; and</p> <p>that the child’s placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child’s relevant plans is requested, if—</p>	<p>31/07/2019</p>

the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child's needs; the child is, or has been, persistently absent from the home without permission; or the child requests a review of the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(i)(e)(i)(ii)(iii))	
The registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 16 (5))	31/07/2019

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- Positive relationships are those which are characterised by consistency and unconditional positive regard for the child on the part of the carer; and where the carer acknowledges the importance of understanding and responding to the child's lived experiences of care. Positive, stable relationships help the child to feel secure and cared about. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 21, paragraph 4.3)
- The registered person must ensure that staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to respond to the health needs of children admitted to the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.12)
Specifically, the consistent management of long-term or chronic illnesses.
- Staff should be skilled in understanding the range of influences that friendships can have and discourage those with a negative impact on the children living in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 38, paragraph 8.8)
- There may be circumstances where a child can be prevented from leaving a home - for example a child who is putting themselves at risk of injury by leaving the home to carry out gang-related activities or use drugs. Any such measure of restraint must be proportionate and in place for no longer than is necessary to manage immediate risk. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 48, paragraph 9.52)
- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of the information from the independent and internal monitoring (under Regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph

10.24)

- 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 homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- Any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person must make rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting welfare and include feedback from stakeholders, children and where possible parents. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Since the last inspection in June 2018, three young people have been discharged from the home and placed in alternative accommodation. At the time of this inspection, two young people were accommodated.

The admission process for young people is deficient. Young people are not provided with information, including details of the well-being for life programme operated by the home, in order that they can make an informed decision about the placement. As a result, young people fail to develop a sense of belonging within the home and consistently refuse to engage in the programme. This includes declining the sessions with the company's clinical psychologist, which are devised to promote positive life changes for the young people.

The atmosphere within this home is tense. Young people present as being on their guard and are not relaxed and content in the home. There is a significant hierarchy between peers, which has resulted in some young people being encouraged to join in with risk-taking and criminal behaviours. Relationships between young people and some staff are also strained. Young people do not engage positively with staff in order to work towards the aims of the placement. A young person said, 'Staff stick together. I don't feel like they care.' Young people fail to make positive and trusting relationships with the adults within the home.

The educational attendance and attainment of young people accommodated in the home are limited. Young people regularly refuse to attend school and either remain in bed or go missing from the home. Although staff try and encourage young people's attendance, there is little challenge to young people and limited consequences are provided by staff in order to manage this consistent problem. As a result, young people's life chances are compromised by the lack of positive educational experiences and learning. Since the

arrival of the new manager in February 2019, and the discharge of some young people, it is noted that there is some improvement in this area.

Young people confirm that they know how to complain. However, one young person said, 'There is no point complaining.' Young people told inspectors that they raise concerns but nothing happens. Consequently, young people do not feel empowered to complain and do not believe that they will be taken seriously or that their worries will be acted upon appropriately. Since the last inspection, there has been one complaint made by a young person. Although the outcome of the complaint is recorded on file, there is a limited record of the investigation process.

Although young people are registered with local healthcare professionals, the healthcare management of one young person with a chronic health condition was significantly flawed. Action taken by staff in an attempt to manage the young person's refusal of essential medication was ineffective and therefore jeopardised the welfare of this young person.

Young people are provided with opportunities to take part in a variety of activities. Some young people engage and enjoy time go-karting and attending the cinema. Other young people engage in activities provided by the organisation's education facility and this includes off-road scrambling and jet skiing. Young people say that the activities are good, but it depends on which staff are on duty.

Where possible, contact with family members is suitably promoted. Staff provide supervision and support where necessary and young people are kept informed regarding their contact arrangements.

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

Safeguarding and risk management practice within the home are inadequate. A lack of suitable action by management and staff means that significant risk-taking behaviours of young people continue unchecked, which compromises young people's overall health, safety and well-being.

In April 2019, the home was issued with a Community Protection Warning by the police. This is because the steps taken by the previous manager did not address the behaviours being exhibited by young people and failed to encourage them to make and sustain positive lifestyle changes. The management and staff do not have the skills, knowledge or experience to effectively support and manage young people with complex risk-taking behaviours. Young people are not suitably matched and therefore safeguarding concerns have continued to escalate.

The organisation's and previous manager's response to ongoing concerns regarding drug misuse, drug possession and potential involvement in drug distribution is inadequate. Young people have frequently returned to the home under the influence of substances. Drug paraphernalia is regularly removed from young people's bedrooms. Room searches have found an array of concerning items, including cannabis, cash, mobile phones,

alcohol, car and house keys, credit and debit cards and knives. Furthermore, unknown to staff members, a young person was able to purchase a machete using a stolen credit card. The machete was only discovered by staff when it was delivered to the home. The manager and staff have failed to implement measures that would tackle these concerns in a constructive and consistent way.

Although young people are known to consistently use illicit substances and take part in criminal activity within the community, rooms are not searched unless a concern is raised. Therefore, items that should give rise to concern, including weapons, go unnoticed in young people's bedrooms. Records of room searches taking place do not identify where removed items are stored. Likewise, when items are confiscated by the police as evidence in a crime, the staff do not record an inventory of these items or a receipt and collar number for the officer removing them. Therefore, as a result of poor accounting, the manager and staff cannot be certain of the whereabouts of items removed from young people's bedrooms.

Young people living at the home have a history of gang-related activity, including drug-related concerns and involvement in, and exposure to, criminal activity. Since coming to this home, the risks of continued involvement in such activity have failed to be addressed. This means that young people have continued to be exposed to, and involved in, anti-social and criminal activity, for example on two occasions, young people have been involved in the theft of motor vehicles, young people openly smoke cannabis and drink alcohol inside the home and they have seriously assaulted staff. Since the arrival of the new manager in February 2019, steps are being taken to address some issues and this has resulted in the discharge of two young people.

The home operates a three-phase well-being for life programme aimed at reducing risk-taking behaviours and enabling young people to learn how to manage future potential risk situations. The initial phase stipulates that young people will not be allowed free time and will be supervised by staff on a one-to-one basis. However, since the last inspection in June 2018, there have been 127 instances when young people were reported as missing from the home. This data does not consider the further regular short absences of all young people who return to the home with cannabis, which are not recorded in the absence logs. Neither have these instances been identified as a trend or pattern that would be a cause of concern.

According to records, only 27 return home interviews were undertaken with young people. Although managers and staff attempt to discuss young people's episodes of going missing, they are unable to gain information such as friends' and acquaintances' names and addresses or where the young people are spending their time. When information does come to light, there is little follow-up from the staff in order to risk manage future situations. This level of going missing from home activity indicates the extent of disengagement of young people living in the home.

The manager has failed to ensure that robust behaviour management strategies are in place within the home. A staff member stated that, 'Working in the home is dangerous. Staff are scared. The home is doing nothing for these young people.' Despite staff

attending training in behaviour management, the shortfalls identified at this inspection have proved the training to be ineffective. Furthermore, the young people's ongoing behaviours demonstrate that staff do not have the skills and knowledge needed to support the young people in a safe way.

There is a lack of urgency in responding to concerns about young people's safety and welfare. For example, the failure to produce a thorough risk management and reduction plan for each young person means that there are no safe care boundaries in place within the home. Likewise, information provided from the home to external agencies about safeguarding concerns is minimised. Consequently, external agencies are of the understanding that matters are being appropriately managed and addressed by the home, rather than the continual, and ineffective, attempts to crisis manage events in the home.

There is a failure to provide the staff with suitable guidance, to ensure that concerns about young people's welfare are acted on quickly and that allegations are addressed in line with the home's procedures. For example, internal investigations into allegations against staff were undertaken by the previous manager without the appropriate initial consultation and guidance with the local authority designated officer. Furthermore, previous managers and staff failed to inform the police of one occasion when young people were threatened by adults coming into the home and within the community. This lack of transparency serves to compromise the ongoing safety of young people placed in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The registered manager left the home in February 2019 to undertake a new management position within the organisation. A new manager was appointed and commenced her management role in February 2019. The postholder's application to register with Ofsted is ongoing.

The assessment and matching of young people who are admitted to the home are inadequate. Young people have been admitted without visiting the home and without clear information on the three-phase well-being for life programme. This failure to ensure that young people are suitably matched has resulted in an escalation of risk-taking behaviours, which serves to compromise young people, staff and the community.

The manager has failed to lead and manage the home in a way which is consistent with the home's statement of purpose. The failure to address the significant risk-taking behaviours, safeguarding concerns and young people's disengagement with the service serves to exacerbate the cycle of risk. Therefore, outcomes for young people are exceptionally compromised.

Regular independent monitoring takes place at the home. Reports from this monitoring highlight some of the concerns identified within this inspection. However, there are no clear actions or responses by the manager to effectively address the areas for improvement. In addition, there are regular occasions where feedback from

stakeholders, young people and parents is not sought to inform the reported analysis of the care provided in the home.

The supervision of staff is inconsistent. Staff do not receive a suitable level of guidance and support in order to work with and to manage the complex needs and behaviours of the young people placed in the home. A staff member stated that working in the home is dangerous, that staff are scared and are unable to manage the behaviours and risks that young people present. Evidence indicates that the manager and staff are physically assaulted and spat at by young people. However, no action is taken to support the staff in managing the magnitude of the concerns raised.

The numerous shortfalls highlighted demonstrate poor leadership and management practice and a lack of ability to take effective action to improve the quality of care in the home. This has compromised the safety, experience and progress of the young people accommodated in the home.

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: 1240883

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care 4 Children

Registered provider address: Care 4 Children, 1 Stuart Road, Bredbury Park Industrial Estate, Bredbury, Stockport SK6 2SR

Responsible individual: Amy Moulton

Registered manager: post vacant

Inspectors

Maria McGranaghan: social care inspector

Michelle Bacon: social care inspector

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