

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 local authority home 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: 24 to 25 October 2019

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: 30 October 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/10/2018	Full	Outstanding
31/01/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
20/06/2017	Full	Outstanding
27/09/2016	Full	Requires improvement

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

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 the risks presented by the home's locality, such as main roads, and how the home manages these risks, such as when young people use bicycles.

- The home's records on each child represent a significant contribution to their life history. Children and their parents should be supported to understand the nature of records kept by the home and how to access them. Staff should understand their important role in encouraging the child to reflect on and understand their history, according to their age and understanding. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)

Records should be written using clear language so that children can understand past events as well as their journey of living at the home.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people receive care of an exceptionally high quality from the staff, who clearly demonstrate a commitment to meeting their individual needs. As a result, young people are making significant progress from their starting points.

Care plans are highly personalised, and excellent multi-agency working means that all professionals work consistently to promote young people's progress. The staff clearly understand the aims of the placement plans and are aspirational for young people to achieve them. Progress is carefully monitored and reviewed, and the home is embedding evidence-based tools, including the 'Outcomes Star', to measure the outcomes for young people.

The staff work creatively to ensure that young people engage in health appointments and receive any outstanding treatments from previous placements. Health issues are dealt with sensitively, to respect and support young people's dignity. Emotional health is promoted exceptionally well, due to close joint working between the home and other services, such as the child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), therapeutic services commissioned by the local authority and the child in care specialist nurses. One young person no longer requires medication to help to support his emotions and behaviour. CAMHS provide advice as well as deliver additional training in the home's team meetings. This means that the staff are knowledgeable and skilled in supporting and improving young people's emotional well-being.

Most young people have made significant progress in their educational placements since moving to the home. Those who had limited attendance and engagement before are now attending and engaging more consistently. The staff work closely with schools and the virtual school to overcome any barriers to learning, working creatively to encourage young people to value education and set career goals. One young person has made significant progress in his ability to manage and learn in a group environment and has received multiple awards in recognition of his kindness to others at school.

Young people enjoy a wide range of activities and see the people who are important to them. Spending time with family members and former carers is promoted extremely well so that it progresses away from children's centres and to overnight stays. Young people visit their friends, have them to visit at the home and go on activities together.

One young person has successfully returned home to live with a family member. A well-planned, progressive transition enabled this to be achieved successfully. Another young person has moved to a placement more appropriate to her individual and educational needs. The home had worked tirelessly with other professionals to secure a place in mainstream education at her request, and sought alternative provision when this was no longer sustainable. Positively, her attendance had improved from her starting point, and support for her emotional well-being reduced her incidents of self-harming behaviour. Thorough analysis of the complex influencing factors enabled the manager to support

Careful planning of the transition with social work professionals. The strength of relationships that the young person had formed with the staff meant that she could travel with them to her new placement, rather than by secure transport, and she has maintained contact with the team.

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

Young people's safety takes highest priority and is central to the home's practice. Careful planning and assessment of all young people's needs are undertaken before a new young person moves into the home, to ensure compatibility. The home's location is considered and reviewed as part of this process, but does not currently include the risk presented by the main road near the home. However, in practice, action is taken so that young people are aware of the dangers, for example, by ensuring they complete cycle safety training before riding a bicycle in the local area.

The skilled staff have an excellent understanding of young people's individual risks and follow the plans to manage them. They work meaningfully and creatively to help young people to understand their risks, concerning behaviours and the actions that staff will take to help them to become safer.

The staff follow all procedures to ensure that if a young person goes missing, they return safely and can speak to someone independent of the home. One young person with a history of regularly going missing has settled at the home and this behaviour has significantly reduced, and there has been just one 'missing' incident.

The home has introduced an innovative and bespoke system for managing access to the internet via a mobile application. The manager was involved in its development and it has been designed to comply with the general data protection regulation. This enables streaming systems for films and entertainment to be available for young people to use safely, as well as setting access to Wi-Fi for each individual. This means that a generic approach is avoided and usage can be monitored. For one young person who uses technology excessively, this has been a useful development, together with close working with her family, to help her to reduce her reliance on internet use.

Alarms are used on two external doors. A risk assessment and permission from social workers are in place for their use. They are assessed as an appropriate monitoring system due to the age of one of the young people living there.

In general, young people respond very positively to praise and incentives that promote positive behaviour. Resources, including storybooks, are used to help younger individuals to understand and manage their emotions better.

Consequences are infrequently imposed. Staff work with young people to help them to understand the reasons for consequences, such as ensuring that they use safety equipment when riding bicycles in line with their bicycle training programme or making clear their expected behaviour when travelling in the car. A restorative approach is embedded in the home's practice to help young people to understand the impact of their

actions and develop empathy for others. There is a strong ethos in the home that young people should not be criminalised.

The staff team's ability to use de-escalation skills effectively means that physical intervention has been required on only one occasion. This was to prevent a young person from seriously self-harming. The record is comprehensive, with thorough debriefings conducted with both the young person and the staff members involved.

Any incidents of bullying are immediately addressed and strategies put in place to minimise further incidents. Young people are supported to reflect on their behaviour and given opportunities to complain if they wish.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The highly experienced manager and deputy lead a team of staff who share a vision and passion to improve the lives of young people. The commitment of the whole team to provide stability and consistent care is evident in their willingness to be flexible, for example to cover sickness, so that agency staff are not used. There have been no changes in the team, reflecting a collective resilience through any challenging periods. The manager and deputy use opportunities from their observations while working shifts to share good practice across the team.

The manager is extremely focused on helping young people to access the support that they need to help them to achieve. She will challenge and escalate when there is any delay in the assessments required to fully understand young people's needs, so that the correct services and support can be identified. A range of tools are used to track young people's progress and to highlight potential patterns of behaviour which may indicate barriers to achievement. The manager is accessing additional training in the 'Outcomes Star' so that she can confidently further embed its use in practice, and is considering other measurement stars that could be useful.

The staff report being exceptionally well supported and have ample opportunities to reflect on their practice through formal and informal supervision and regular team meetings. Team meetings are planned to discuss topics that are relevant to young people. The staff research articles to present and share learning from training events. Professional development is promoted through a range of training opportunities and bespoke consultation to meet the individual needs of young people. The staff recognise the investment and support of the responsible individual in the home.

Young people have a central role in all planning in the home. They contribute their views in young people's meetings and individually. These are opportunities to reflect on their own progress and make suggestions for the home. The staff use a range of consultation approaches according to young people's individual wishes and differences in age, such as a chat over a coffee, and are currently designing a game as a creative way of gathering views. Photographic evidence is collected to demonstrate how young people's requests are responded to and to add to young people's life stories. However, some records use generic language, which is not always helpful for young people to understand their

journey.

The home has well-established and highly effective relationships with a broad range of professionals and services that support the young people. Feedback from family members and professionals highlights the staff team's proactive approach, regular communication and positive effect on young people's progress. The home is considered welcoming and inclusive.

Independent and internal monitoring drives continuous improvement in the home. The manager and deputy have implemented new audit tools and are introducing peer audits with another of the local authority's homes. This promotes the sharing of good practice to improve outcomes for young people and reflects the strong aspiration and ambition to provide the highest quality service.

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 difference 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 address: Cheshire West and Chester Council, Council Offices, 4 Civic Way, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire CH65 0BE

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 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 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: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019