

SC010090

Registered provider: Partners in Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private company. The home provides care for up to three children who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties in the main house and for one child in a separate cottage within the same grounds.

A new manager was appointed in May 2019 and has submitted an application to Ofsted to be registered. She is currently working towards a level 5 qualification.

Inspection dates: 26 to 27 November 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 **good**

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: 4 July 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection: A monitoring visit was undertaken on 12 December 2018 to consider information received by Ofsted that suggested there may have been a breach of regulations. This related to two complaints that were received by Ofsted. Both complaints raised concerns about children and staff not being safeguarded. Ofsted had received notifications that also highlighted concerns about the standard of practice in the home. Following this visit, the home voluntarily closed for four months. It

re-opened in May 2019 with a newly appointed manager and staff team.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/07/2018	Full	Good
22/08/2017	Full	Good
08/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
11/07/2016	Full	Good

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
An individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b))	31/12/2019

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

From individual starting points, children make exceptional progress because of the high-quality care they receive from competent and dedicated staff. Children recognise their own progress and the way in which staff support their achievements. One child said, 'When I was at [the home], I felt alive,' and others said that the home and team are 'excellent'. Children said that staff work consistently, which helps them to build trust and develop a sense of security and belonging, clearly reflecting how staff develop enduring, positive and meaningful relationships.

Children contribute to their individualised care planning so that they understand their own goals and can review their progress. Multi-professional planning is extremely well-focused so that children's journeys are clearly tracked through the progressive phases of

the home's model of care, demonstrated in the home's keyworker sessions.

There is a strong focus on the benefits of education. All children are new in placement, and the manager has repeatedly sought advice from the virtual head to seek the right education for the children. In the meantime, a private tutor has been brought into the home to keep children in a routine and install in the children that education happens every day in this home. Children's academic achievements are celebrated with further praise when they receive their results. Staff ensure that there is a healthy balance between study and leisure activities so that children can have fun in their spare time, in keeping with their personal preferences. During the summer holidays, they enjoyed going on holiday and attending a drama group, and some activities were new experiences.

One child moved on from the home only to return two weeks later. Staff said that they helped the child to develop strategies so that they could confidently make the transition back to their parents' home. Staff took care to reassure the child after matters did not go to plan and welcomed the child back into the home, ensuring that routines and the environment were quickly re-established to reduce any anxieties.

Children enjoy good health, attend health appointments and are encouraged in physical activity. One child's coordination and posture have improved because of swimming and cycling since moving to the home. Children contribute to designing a healthy and balanced menu. There are good links with external professionals, such as the NSPCC and the nurse for children looked after, to promote children's healthy development and well-being.

The NSPCC works closely with the managers and key workers on a fortnightly basis, so that children have a good understanding of their life story, and they address any issues of concern. The staff have a strong understanding of the impact of attachment needs and past trauma. This informs their practice, enabling them to support children's emotional and psychological well-being. One social worker commented on how the home is supporting a child's ongoing therapy needs. This reflects the efficacy of the manager in supporting the specific needs of the children and in building their resilience and self-esteem so that they are able to move forward.

Children contribute to decisions made in the home. They hold regular meetings and also speak to staff at any time to share their views and complete consultation forms that are shared in meetings. They feel no need to complain about their care but know how to do so. They clearly feel valued and respected as individuals by staff. Staff fully support children in their contact with their families, to maintain these important attachments, but will also challenge when arrangements have a negative impact on children's sense of stability.

The environment created by the home is inviting and warm. Christmas decorations and festive art adorn the garden and the bedrooms. The home underwent a full programme of decoration during its period of closure and it is now modern and fresh. However, some practices of notice boards and staff wearing lanyards in the home spoil the homely

environment the manager is trying to create, and a recommendation has been made to look at this area.

Feedback from professionals is extremely positive about the standard of care, the level of communication from the home and the resulting positive outcomes for children. One social worker remarked that '[the child] has progressed remarkably', and that the home has accommodated driving forward his care plan. She commented that she has 'nothing but praise' and on how staff 'are really supportive of [the child's] life'. An independent reviewing officer for another child spoke of ways in which the home has worked 'amazingly well to develop [the child]' and of how 'he shines out now' in his social skills compared to his starting point. Another professional said, 'If all [children] lived somewhere like that, then they would do better.' Such views highlight that the home clearly places children at the centre of practice, going beyond expectations to promote their best life chances and outcomes.

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

Children feel very safe in the home and are helped to become increasingly safe in the community. Children reported that they are very well supported by staff who care for and understand them well. Children know that staff are there to help them and feel able to talk about any concerns they might have, confident that they will be listened to and taken seriously.

Staff have a very thorough safeguarding knowledge and are highly skilled in responding to children's needs. Assessments of risk and strategies implemented to manage and reduce them are regularly reviewed and updated in response to children's circumstances.

Since the monitoring visit in December 2018, there have been no safeguarding issues. Children have not been reported missing or absent from the home, and there have been no complaints.

There is little conflict between children living in the home, and they were observed to enjoy light-hearted conversations with one another over mealtimes. They are helped to understand ways in which their presentation might be perceived by others, so that they learn to express themselves better. Children clearly identify how their experiences at the home have helped them to make positive progress in their lives and become safer.

Staff have only needed to use physical intervention on one occasion, and no sanctions have been required. This is because staff help children understand why the very clear rules and boundaries are in place.

Children who have previous histories of self-injurious behaviours have stopped engaging in such behaviours, demonstrating how the staff understand and help them to manage their emotions more effectively, and promote their safety and well-being.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The current manager benefited from a lengthy transition into her new role, when no children were living at the home. She was able to employ a new staff team, draw a line over the past and start afresh. She has relevant qualifications in social care and is currently undertaking a level 5 qualification in leadership and management. She also has extensive experience and understanding of residential care from her previous roles as deputy and clearly demonstrates her knowledge and focus on the needs and progress of children.

Staff confirmed that the manager is very supportive and has an open-door policy so that they can access support on an ongoing basis, and they said that she will help out at any time. They share the manager's passion and high aspirations for the best outcomes for children, enthusiastically talking about their work. Staff are clearly committed to encouraging children to try new experiences and enhance their opportunities and share a collective ownership of their responsibility to do the best for children.

Practice is monitored through regular, reflective supervision and appraisal. There is well-planned training in place to support the team's ongoing professional development. Staff spoke confidently about the work they do with the NSPCC, as well as the underpinning training that informs their practice. They thereby demonstrated that their exceptionally competent practice and commitment accord with the home's statement of purpose.

Only two of the 13 staff members recruited for the role of residential childcare workers have the relevant qualification. The manager was keen to discuss the positives of the staff team and that their previous experiences in other sectors has helped to form a dedicated team of professionals. The staff members have enrolled onto the diploma level 3 course.

The manager carefully plans and analyses children's progress with the team. In addition to regular team meetings, multidisciplinary team meetings provide oversight and guidance to children's progression. Regularly progress reports provide stakeholders with a clear overview of children's progress, and all external professionals were unanimous in their view that communication from the home is highly effective.

Robust monitoring systems ensure that the manager has effective oversight of the quality of care provided by the home. The independent visitor provides colourful analytical reports that help the manager identify any shortfalls. Internal monitoring takes into account the views of children, parents and professionals to provide a holistic picture of children's experience.

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: SC010090

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Partners in Care Limited

Registered provider address: Rouse House, 2 Wyther Lane, Kirkstall, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS5 3BT

Responsible individual: Amanda Quinn

Registered manager: post vacant

Inspector: Elaine Clare, social care inspector

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