

2509670

Registered provider: Crystal Care Solutions Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The home was registered by Ofsted in March 2019. The home began operating in September 2019.

The manager's application to register is in progress.

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 December 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

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

Recommendations

- Where children placed in a home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, the registered person and staff must work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. If no education place is identified by the placing authority, the registered person must challenge them to meet the child's needs under regulation 5 (engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28 paragraph 5.15)
- The ethos of the home should support each child to learn, emphasising the value of independent study and reading for enjoyment. The home must make available suitable facilities, equipment and resources for learning and ensure that the home's routines do not form barriers to children wishing to use the home's resources to study. Staff must support children with home study by encouraging them to learn independent study skills and helping them to practise those skills. ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.8)
- The registered person is responsible for ensuring that each child's day to day health and well-being needs are met. Staff should work to make the children's home an environment that supports children's physical, mental and emotional health. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.3) Specifically, the registered manager should ensure that each child is eating a healthy, balanced diet.
- The registered person should ensure that children are offered a wide range of activities both inside and outside of the home (where appropriate) and are encouraged to participate in those activities. Staff should support children to take part in school trips, out of school and other clubs, volunteering and leisure activities. ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.5)
- Staff skills for safeguarding should include being able to identify signs that children may be at risk, and support children in strategies to manage and reduce any risks. Staff should encourage children to express their views about whether they feel safe both within and outside the home. Staff should support children to understand how to ask for help to stay safe and that the home is an environment which supports this. ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.10)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

For the two young people in placement, overall progress and experience are limited by the short timescale of placements and the inability of the home to meet the needs of one young person. One placement has ended in an unplanned manner. The home has been unable to meet the needs of this young person or to provide a significant positive contribution to their care.

For one young person who has remained in placement for a longer period of time, there is some limited evidence of progress. The pace of this progress has been adversely affected by the admission of a second young person to the home.

Young people are not in education. Young people are accessing very limited one-to-one tuition in the home provided by the local authority. The home is not ensuring that in addition to this provision, young people have a programme of suitable educational activities. As a result of this, young people are not being adequately supported to engage with learning and prepare themselves for a return to formal education.

There is a lack of resources in the home to support young people's informal learning. There are no books or magazines in the communal areas of the home to encourage young people to read for pleasure. This means that potential opportunities to promote new interests and improve comprehension and reading are being missed.

Young people's daily lives lack structure. Young people are not involved in activities in the community. They are not accessing opportunities to try new hobbies or develop existing interests. The lack of educational and recreational activities means that young people are not experiencing an environment which provides them with the best chance of making good progress from their starting points.

Young people's health needs are, on the whole, being met. They are accessing health services locally. Young people are not always being provided with a healthy, balanced diet. There are incidents where there is an over-reliance on over-processed and sugary food. This means that young people are not being provided with the skills and knowledge that they need to make healthy lifestyle choices in preparation for independence.

Young people's contact with their families is encouraged where this is appropriate. There is good communication between the home and family members. Staff work with families to support young people spending time with their family. As a result, young people are supported to understand their family, heritage and history.

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

improvement to be good

Interactions between young people are not always positive. Young people have engaged in negative alliances. As a result of this, young people have been involved in criminal activity, antisocial behaviour, and episodes of being missing from care. This has impacted on the stability of the home and the progress of young people.

When young people go missing, there is a good response from staff. Clear procedures are in place for each young person. The risks associated with young people being missing are well understood. The home is involved in a well-coordinated multi-agency response. Staff are active in their contribution to risk management during and following missing-from-care incidents.

One young person has been involved in increased risk-taking behaviours due to the influence of another young person. Staff told the inspector that the young person was now demonstrating through his behaviours that he felt unsafe in the home following the admission of the second young person. This means that the home has not been effective in ensuring that his emotional and physical well-being is supported effectively.

Risks are generally well understood. Risk assessments are in place, which are regularly reviewed. In one incident, the risk associated with a young person's attitude to knives and possession of a knife had not been addressed effectively. As a result of this, he has not been supported to develop his understanding of the dangers to himself and others of knife possession.

Young people are rarely restrained within the home. In the instances when young people have been restrained, this has been proportionate to the risk they posed to themselves and others. Restraints are well recorded and are evaluated by the manager. Young people have opportunities to reflect on restraints after the incident.

There have been several occasions when police have been called to the home to manage the behaviour of young people. In one incident, police were called as both young people were able to leave the home in the middle of the night, having stolen the home's television. Night staff were not alerted to this, although young people's bedrooms have door alarms. As a result of this police involvement, young people are at greater risk of being criminalised.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has been in post since the home opened in September 2019. She is not yet registered with Ofsted. A deputy manager has also been in post since this time, having transferred from one of the organisation's other homes.

Due to the delay in the home opening after registration, some staff are currently working at other homes within the organisation until more young people are admitted. There are suitable plans in place to ensure sufficient staffing.

Staff have a good induction to their role in the home. Staff are expected to complete formal online and face-to-face training. In addition to this, they shadow a number of shifts before taking on duties themselves. This provides them with a well-paced introduction to the home.

The manager has a good understanding of the progress of young people. When young people are not making progress, she escalates concerns to the placing authority to seek a review of the needs of the young person. The manager is active in her contribution to multi-agency decision-making and care planning.

Staff receive regular supervision which is of a good quality. Supervision provides staff with time to reflect on their practice and on the progress of young people. Recording of supervision is comprehensive and provides staff with a clear record of supervision discussions.

The service manager for the home completes monthly audits of case records. This provides effective challenge and support to the manager. It complements the work of the independent person in promoting best practice within the home.

The physical environment of the home is excellent. Some minor damage has been caused by young people. This is being rectified. Communal areas of the home are not yet personalised. Progress has been hampered by recent negative behaviours of young people. Plans are in place to make progress with this. This will help make communal areas more homely and give young people a greater sense of belonging.

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: 2509670

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Crystal Care Solutions Limited

Registered provider address: Bank House, Market Square, Congleton, Cheshire
CW12 1ET

Responsible individual: James O'Leary

Registered manager: post vacant

Inspector

Dawn Parton, social care inspector

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