

1244283

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for three young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is privately owned.

The home's statement of purpose describes the service as: 'Our ethos of care is one of immediate acceptance, irrespective of presentation. It is flexible and responsive determined by the unique circumstances of the individual at the time, without detracting from the need for children to experience a safe, warm, nurturing, stable and consistent living environment, however short or long their stay with us.'

Inspection dates: 22 to 23 May 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	Good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection:

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection

Not applicable

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- A thorough pre-placement process is undertaken for all admissions to the home. This ensures that the matching of young people reduces any potential for inappropriate relationships to be formed.
- Young people develop trusted relationships with the staff and each other. They share their concerns and receive the support and advice that they need. The young people enjoy encouraging relationships with the staff that enable them to reflect on their history and identify ways in which they can move forward.
- Staff provide many opportunities for young people to discuss difficult issues. Young people make good use of these sessions and young people say that the staff listen to them.
- Young people have access to a range of specialist support in the home to support their emotional well-being. Young people benefit greatly from the therapeutic work provided by the organisation.
- Young people engage well in education or voluntary work placements. There is a good working relationship between the staff at the home and the local school. Young people are supported at school in line with their care needs.
- Young people are sustaining their outside friendships which are beneficial to them. They engage with the wider community through these friendships, as well as attending local leisure facilities and having fun with the staff in the home.
- Young people have good opportunities to develop their life skills. They are capable and undertake day-to-day independence skills.
- Young people are safe in the home. Staff understand their vulnerabilities, previous histories and the underlying psychological reasons for their behaviour.
- Behaviour support plans are detailed and individual to each young person. They inform the staff of the presenting behaviours and the strategies to use. The strong emphasis on de-escalation and distraction are having a positive impact on young people. As a result, the home is very settled.
- The registered manager and his team have a good awareness of the different needs of the young people, and they work well with placing authorities to ensure that young people make progress from their starting point in the home.
- Staff benefit from good leadership and support, including group and individual clinical supervision. This enables them to reflect on their working practices and understand the model of care being used with the young people.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The home is new and was registered with Ofsted on 9 January 2017.

- The systems have been implemented and embedded, although evidence is limited due to the short time young people have lived in the home.
- Further work is needed to develop a good track record to sustain the continuing improvement work with the young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people build trusting and supportive relationships with the staff and with each other, which help them to move in successfully, settle and make progress in all aspects of their lives. They appreciate the difference that living in the home has made for them. This includes understanding themselves better, engaging and re-engaging with their education and exploring any difficult emotions and previous issues that they have. Young people commented positively about their experiences in the home and said:

- 'I really like the support I receive, it is just like home, and we have pets and the staff bring in their dogs.'
- 'The staff fully understand me and do not judge my behaviour. I love the dogs and my hamster.'
- 'The home is really nice and posh. Staff always listen to us and respond to any questions we raise.'
- 'They [staff] care about me in this home and I really appreciate this.'

Young people's interactions with staff and each other were observed throughout the inspection. The conversations were warm, friendly and fun. Young people confirmed that they had an introduction into the home, received information about the services they can expect and feel this really helped them.

Staff invest time with the young people. They develop dependable relationships with the staff who care for them. Staff are available at all times and spend one-to-one time with them on their return from school or their work placement. Young people are actively supported to develop their interests, such as arts and crafts, outside hobbies and sustain relationships with their friends. Young people know that staff are interested in their individual welfare. Staff welcome young people's friends into the home and listen to their interests and dreams. As one young person said, 'A big shout out to all the staff who never fail to put a smile on my face.'

The organisation enables young people to access a range of services to promote their physical and psychological health and emotional well-being. Young people engage in the therapeutic work provided to them in the home each week. Often, they can reflect on how this has helped them to understand and come to terms with the impact of previous negative experiences.

A professional therapist working for the organisation provides regular summary reports of their work carried out with the young people, and these are used effectively to update and amend care and behaviour management plans. Staff also have access to the organisation's psychotherapist and, through discussion in team meetings, build a greater understanding of the specific model of care to support the young people's psychological needs and associated behaviours.

In a short period of time, young people have significantly improved their attitude towards education and learning. They are attending regularly and engaging in school or

voluntary work placements. This is a marked improvement from their previous chaotic lives. One parent said, 'Considering where my daughter has come from, and being involved with a "bad lot" no education when she lived with me, she just would not go, to now attending the local school, is amazing.'

The staff work closely with the local school and with a charity shop. They intervened when a young person reported that the buddy system set up in school was not supporting the young person appropriately. As a result, the young person was provided with more suitable support from her peers, which enabled her to feel confident and settle into school. Staff support another young person in her work placement. This raises the young person's confidence and improves her social and employment skills while having contact and dealing with members of the public.

Staff are extremely aware of how some young people's relationships with their families or relationships with their friends can be a source of anxiety and turmoil. Therefore, personalised and carefully thought out strategies are implemented. This reduces any potential trauma and upset caused by these visits and is managed sensitively and skilfully. As a result, young people are able to identify how they are affected by contact and how to cope with the emotions that this may trigger.

Young people develop their independence at a pace and level appropriate to their individual ages and understanding. For some, this may be improving bedroom tidiness and personal hygiene; for others, this may be cooking meals, independent transport and budgeting. Young people confirmed that they are capable of taking care of themselves and being involved in their daily tasks.

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

Young people admitted to the home often bring significant risks that have caused concern within their last placement or while living at home. The staff are equipped with this knowledge in order to understand, intervene, support and protect the young people. Young people are safe in the home and say they feel safe. Previous high-risk behaviours quickly diminish. This is because young people experience a smaller group setting and have the benefit of staff who are responsive to their needs.

Staff are regularly trained on safeguarding procedures and have a good awareness of the different needs of the young people and how to respond to these. Staff are trained in, and demonstrate well, their understanding of recognising the signs of child sexual exploitation. They know that young people in the home are especially vulnerable and are alert to potential threats, especially with regards to internet usage, grooming and radicalisation. In addition, online hyperlinks also provide up-to-date research and training for staff in relation to keeping young people safe.

Young people's risk assessments are detailed, understood by staff and have effective strategies in place to prevent young people from engaging in risky behaviour. These risk assessments, which are understood by young people, are effective in changing the young people's behaviours.

Incidents of young people being absent from the home are low and, from their starting points in the home, their previous missing behaviour has reduced to zero. For the young

people currently placed, this represents a significant achievement and demonstrates the difference that the home is making. A placing social worker and a parent agreed that, before coming to the home, their child was going missing and putting herself at significant risk. This has now stopped.

Incidents of young people self-harming have significantly reduced. This is because staff recognise the triggers which cause young people to engage in self-harm. They are skilled and experienced in working directly with young people that self-harm, including those where their self-harm behaviours are potentially life threatening. Effective strategies, including one-to-one work to identify the cause of these behaviours, mean that incidents are anticipated and responded to promptly.

Staff are trained in behaviour management strategies and safe restraint techniques. However, there have been no physical interventions with any of the young people from the commencement of their placement. In agreement with the therapist and young people, consequences for inappropriate behaviour are not used. Young people's positive behaviour is encouraged and rewarded. There is a strong emphasis placed on the staff and supported by the registered manager in developing positive relationships with the young people, while being sensitive to their needs to manage their behaviour successfully.

A review of randomly selected staff files demonstrates that safer recruitment processes are rigorously followed. All staff are thoroughly inducted into their roles, considering the specific aims and objectives of the home. This includes expectations about behaviour that promote safe and open relationships, while remaining friendly and supportive. Young people are, therefore, safeguarded by measures taken before staff first work with them.

The young people's social workers confirmed that they are regularly updated about young people's progress, or where more support for them is needed. They feel the home has been a positive move for their young people. One social worker said, 'I know the organisation is opening more new homes, and I would not hesitate to place with them in the future.'

The home is furnished with new fixtures and fittings and is very well presented. A separate purpose-built therapy room looks out over landscape gardens. This provides young people with a private space to relax and feel comfortable when engaging in therapy. Staff pay great attention to ensuring that the home provides young people and visitors with a safe environment. Health and safety, fire checks and evacuations are completed by delegated staff and overseen by the registered manager.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is experienced and qualified. He has over 14 years of work experience with children looked after, including his progression to the role of registered manager. He has achieved the level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare. The registered manager demonstrates drive and is passionate towards continual improvement in standards of care, and he has high expectations for young people's

progress and outcomes.

The registered manager is supported by his senior management team in the home. Most of the staff in this team are experienced and all three seniors are enrolled onto the level 5 diploma qualification. There is good support from experienced leaders to enhance further the skills of the management team. This leads to staff being supported by competent and skilled lead practitioners.

Staff are sufficient in number to provide young people with individual support. They cover work absences, such as sickness and annual leave, and agency staff are not used. The majority of the staff are suitably qualified with four currently undertaking their level 3 qualification. This is expected to be completed within the timescales as required by regulation.

Staff are supervised regularly. Supervision is reflective and gives the staff opportunities to consider their working practices and future development needs. Staff report that team meetings are used effectively to reflect on how well the team is working together to support the young people's care needs. Staff have access to the professional therapist for clinical support and supervision. This allows them to consider their own emotions and feelings which may arise from the behaviours displayed by young people.

The registered manager runs the home in line with the statement of purpose. The main aim and objectives of the home is to support vulnerable young people who have previously experienced a level of high risk and placed themselves in danger. Young people benefit from living in a safe and stable environment where they can gain confidence, build their self-esteem and enhance their resilience skills. The manager and staff demonstrate well the difference that living at the home has made for these young people.

When the registered manager identifies shortfalls in practice, he will seek additional training, for example in areas such as self-harm, safe ligature removal and therapeutic models of care. He utilises team meetings to distribute information and keep staff updated, for example by using information from courses he has attended, relevant research materials and regulations. This approach helps to develop the staff's knowledge.

Internal and external monitoring systems are effective and sufficiently detailed. The management team regularly audits the information recorded by staff in the records kept in the home. Monthly visits by an independent person include discussions with young people, families and professionals. This allows them to gain a good insight into the way the home works. The monthly reports sent to the home and to Ofsted by the independent person show that young people are effectively safeguarded and how the conduct of the home encourages their welfare.

The management team and staff know their responsibilities for the need to inform a range of professionals if significant incidents occur at the home. Two incidents following registration have been sent to Ofsted as required by regulation. These incidents involving young people have been reviewed and show that the home has acted appropriately on both occasions.

No requirements or recommendations are made at the inspection. This is because the

registered manager has a clear development plan in place to sustain the continuing improvement work with the young people.

The development of the home and the improvement work undertaken with the young people will be looked at during the next inspections.

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 who 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: 1244283

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 49 Whitegate Drive, Blackpool, Lancashire FY3 9DG

Responsible individual: Julie McShane

Registered manager: Gary Skidmore

Inspector

Mark Kersh, social care inspector

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