

1247384

Registered provider: Solent Child Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is in its first year of registration. It provides care for up to two young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is located in a rural location within easy reach of local community services.

Inspection dates: 31 October to 1 November 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: Not applicable; the home is in its first year of registration.

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None.

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people are making good progress while living at the home.
- Staff support and facilitate good-quality contact between young people and their families.
- Young people are attending education and making progress academically.
- Staff support young people to address their basic health needs and attend appointments when required.
- The home is comfortable and welcoming, enabling young people to feel safe and relaxed.
- Young people take part in a wide variety of activities. Staff support them to plan holidays and activities.
- Staff are supportive, caring and encouraging, and aspire for each young person to achieve their best.
- Staff work collaboratively with external professionals and young people's care plans reflect the joined-up approach.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Risk assessments do not explore all of the identified risk factors.
- A missing-from-care plan does not detail the actions and responses that are required from staff.
- There are gaps and inconsistencies in the recording of incidents, physical interventions and sanctions, due to the overly complicated recording systems.
- Emergency plans do not consider what action is required in extreme weather conditions.
- Staff do not evidence how they educate and support young people to develop age-appropriate risk taking.
- Staff are not sufficiently confident in their knowledge and understanding of safeguarding policy and procedures.

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

Recommendations

- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5). Specifically, ensure risk assessments enable age-appropriate risk taking and provide clarity regarding actions to minimise and manage risk.
- Supervision of staff practice should ensure that individual adults in the home are engaged in the safeguarding culture of the home so they understand what they would need to do if they found other staff misusing or abusing their position to the detriment of the safety of a child ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.14). Specifically, improve staff knowledge regarding the home's safeguarding policy and procedure.
- The registered person must specify the procedures to be followed and the roles and responsibilities of staff when a child is missing from care or away from the home without permission and how staff should support the child on return to the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.28)
- Records of restraint must be kept and should enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge. The review should provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure it meets the needs of each child ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59). Specifically, develop the quality and consistency of records.
- Contingency plans should be prepared in the event of a shortfall in staffing levels. If it is likely that there might only be one member of staff on duty at any time, the manager should make a formal assessment of the implications for children's care, including any likely risks. This assessment should be recorded and available for inspection by Ofsted and placing authorities ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.18). Specifically, make contingency plans that cover the occurrence of poor weather.
- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. The Statement of Purpose is an important document in the process of care planning as it sets out the needs of children the home is set up and equipped to care for.

(‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 56, paragraph 11.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people who have resided in the home for a period of time make good progress while living here. Those who have recently arrived in the home are developing relationships with staff, and engaging in their plans. They now attend full-time education and participate in activities which they were previously unable to do.

The home is homely and welcoming, enabling young people to feel at ease, relax and be comfortable. It has a pleasant family feel to it. Young people and staff gather daily to share the evening meal together. Staff encourage everyone to contribute and share experiences at mealtimes.

Care plans are child friendly and provide detail and practical suggestions to support staff in caring for young people. Staff and young people quickly form good-quality, positive relationships through the one-to-one approach of staff.

Staff have completed pre-admission assessments and planning for each new arrival to the home through impact risk assessments, but in one case they did not explore all of a young person’s known needs and risks.

The voice of young people is sought. Staff work closely with young people and they have frequent, purposeful conversations. Young people talk to staff about their wishes, feelings and aspirations, and the highs and lows of each day. Young people are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms and living spaces. They choose their weekly menus and activities. Staff have not yet devised systems for formal key-work sessions with clear aims and objectives to educate young people about the impact of risk-taking behaviours. Staff do review each incident with young people and these are recorded as one-to-one conversations.

Staff facilitate and assist with family contact. They follow detailed contact plans which help to ensure that contact between young people and families is well managed for all parties.

Staff advocate effectively for young people. They request reviews and raise issues with placing authorities if they consider that plans do not accurately address the young people’s needs.

Young people are supported to meet all of their basic health needs. Staff refer young people to specialist health services, and seek additional advice and guidance from these services if required. Young people are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles through a balanced diet and physical activity.

Staff support and encourage all young people to attend education. Each young person is engaged in full-time education and is making good academic progress. Staff support young people with their individual education plans, assisting and advocating on their behalf to gain the appropriate education provision.

Staff offer a wide variety of activities in and out of the home. Staff support young people through the provision of structure and routine. Young people attend clubs and voluntary groups to develop their hobbies and interests. These activities include visits to places of interest, local walks, holidays, shopping, playing board games, drama clubs, bushcraft and photography. The location of the home means that a wide variety of outdoor opportunities and activities can be offered.

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

Young people feel safe and secure at the home; they are forming relationships of trust with staff, and seek their support and guidance when worried or upset. Staff help young people to explore ways to manage their emotions and to develop strategies and skills that enable them to work through the challenges they face.

Young people learn to self-regulate and manage their behaviour. They gain knowledge and understanding of the impact of their risk-taking behaviours and this enables them to make more informed choices. Staff are reviewing how they evidence the education and support given to young people to enable them to learn and practice age-appropriate risk taking.

Staff have accessed safeguarding training and have a basic knowledge, but they are not confident about discussing their responses to scenarios and concerns. There is information in the home about issues might arise and how to respond to a concern when it occurs.

Young people's behaviour support plans provide practical information and de-escalation strategies that staff implement and encourage young people to use. Staff focus on providing a consistent approach to young people at times of anxiety and challenge. They use a wide variety of strategies which enable young people to develop their sense of self-worth and confidence. When behaviour has escalated and strategies have not been successful, staff have used physical intervention. Staff are trained in the home's preferred approach. Records that have been completed contain minor inconsistencies and gaps in information. Records do not provide clarity regarding who was involved, what occurred and for how long the restraint was used'.

Young people are rewarded daily for their achievements, no matter how big or small. Staff prefer to use natural consequences in response to misbehaviour, but on occasions they have given sanctions. Records lack evidence that all sanctions have been recorded or reviewed, and do not show that the views of the young person have been sought.

Staff have responded robustly to incidents of missing; staff use the individual 'missing passports', which detail risks and the required responses from staff in the event of a missing episode. One plan was not explicit in detailing the required response from staff.

Managers have good relationships with members of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, and seek advice and information from them when required. Managers have referred concerns and allegations to others appropriately.

The home environment is well managed, well maintained and safe. The home's fire risk assessment and location risk assessment are currently under review. The home's contingency plan details many scenarios and factors which may impact on staffing. It does not detail what is required in extreme weather conditions, although the location and isolation of the home make this strongly advisable.

Safer recruitment processes are followed, with all records meeting the expected and required standards. Managers have altered the recruitment process in an attempt to make the process more informative for new recruits and reduce staff turnover.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is currently managed by an interim day-to-day manager while the registered manager is absent.

The home is in its first year of registration. The team is currently focusing on being consistent in its approach. Staff are in the initial stages of forming as a team.

There has been a high turnover of staff in the home since it opened. This has been due to leaders and managers establishing and embedding the ethos of the home. The home is fully staffed with a diverse team of staff who have relevant knowledge and experience. Senior managers have adapted the recruitment process to ensure that it provides good-quality information to prospective employees.

The home is effectively managed by the day-to-day manager. She has a very good relationship with and knowledge of each young person. There are good systems and processes for evaluating and monitoring the quality of care provided. Action plans detail weaknesses. They state, with timescales, what actions are required in order to improve areas of weakness.

Staff are well supported by managers. Those new to the home receive regular, effective supervision which positively impacts on their professional development. Staff who are in their probation periods have their practice appraised after three and six months. Staff are enrolled to take a course in the required qualification once their probation has been completed. Other staff possess the required qualification.

Managers and staff develop good professional relationships with stakeholders. They maintain regular contact with each young person's key network of people, which has a

positive impact on individual plans.

The ethos of the home as described in the statement of purpose is evident in the home. Staff are caring and supportive, and have empathy for those in their care. Staff follow the home's chosen style of research-based practice, which is having a positive impact on the young people who reside 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: 1247384

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Solent Child Care Ltd

Registered provider address: Solent Child Care Ltd, 9 St George's Yard, Farnham
GU9 7LW

Responsible individual: Charlotte Tanner

Registered manager: Farraday Crews

Inspector

Amanda Maxwell: social care inspector

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