

1257739

Registered provider: Care 4 Children Residential Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is one of a number of homes operated by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for three children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 February 2018

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

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 receive a good level of support and are making good progress in many aspects of their lives.
- Staff fully support young people to maintain contact with their families. As a

result, young people benefit from improved relationships with people who are important to them.

- Staff support young people's physical and emotional health needs well.
- Staff promote the importance of education. Young people are engaging well in their education and achieving good attendance.
- Young people enjoy a wide variety of activities and are supported to achieve and grow in confidence.
- Young people are listened to. They are encouraged to share their views, which are acted on by staff.
- Young people who arrive at the home and who are at risk of criminal exploitation are kept safe from harm.
- Staff identify and respond to safeguarding concerns in an effective manner.
- Effective working with partner agencies promotes young people's safety and well-being.
- The home benefits from the leadership of a suitably experienced registered manager.
- The registered manager ensures that young people receive their care from a consistent staff team that knows them well.
- Staff feel well supported through regular supervision and training that is relevant to their roles.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The standard of risk assessment and risk management is variable. Young people's risk management plans do not always contain up-to-date information about risks and how they should be managed.
- Relationships between young people are not always carefully managed in a way that protects them from bullying.
- Guidance is not sufficiently detailed to ensure that young people benefit from consistent behaviour support.
- The standard of record-keeping is variable, which has potential to undermine the safety and quality of the service.
- Internal monitoring systems are not consistently effective. This means that opportunities to identify improvements could be missed.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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N/A		
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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
12: The protection of children standard The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv))	16/03/2018
35: Behaviour management policies and records The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person	16/03/2018

to do so ("the authorised person")— (i) has spoken to the user about the measure; (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b)(3)(a)(v)(vii)(b)(i))	
36: Children's case records The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))	16/03/2018

Recommendations

- As set out in regulations 31-33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. Specifically relating to employment history checks, they must ensure that recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's home's regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should make best use of information from internal monitoring to ensure continuous improvement. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the children's home's regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people have made positive progress at this home. For example, they are engaging in education, taking part in fulfilling activities, and have reduced high-risk behaviours. A parent of one young person said, 'I feel [X] has moved forward in a good way. He is doing really well so far.'

Young people have developed positive relationships with staff. Young people and staff were observed to interact comfortably and get along well. A young person said, 'They are all sound. They help us when we need it.' A parent commented, '[X] talks about the staff all the time. There is no one he doesn't like. He gets on with them really well.'

Staff frequently support young people's development through positive discussion and direct one-to-one work. Staff take time to ensure that young people have the opportunity to discuss matters that are important to them and plan direct work sessions

carefully. Records of direct work demonstrate that staff follow up significant incidents with young people in a manner that encourages them to reflect and explore their thoughts and feelings. This supports young people's social and emotional development.

Minutes of young people's meetings demonstrate that they are encouraged to share their ideas and express their views about the home. Staff consult young people about areas such as home refurbishment, menus and activities. The registered manager monitors young people's meetings to ensure that any requests they make are followed through by staff. This lets young people know that their views and opinions are valued.

Staff ensure that young people receive the support that they need to maintain important relationships. Parents were complimentary about this aspect of the service, commenting that staff are very accommodating in facilitating contact. Where appropriate, family members are invited to visit the home and have meals with young people. One parent felt that staff had assisted her in improving her relationship with her son and said that this had resulted in increased contact.

Staff ensure that young people are supported to enjoy good health. Young people are registered with medical practitioners and are supported to attend routine appointments. Any matters requiring medical advice are promptly identified by staff, who take appropriate action. One young person has been supported to undergo dental treatment and has had several contacts with an optician in the short time that he has lived at the home. Staff encourage young people to lead a healthy lifestyle. Young people are provided with a nutritious and balanced diet and encouraged to be active.

Young people have access to the organisation's clinical services and therapy team. There are numerous examples of the registered manager seeking advice from the clinical team regarding matters affecting individual young people. Clinical staff attend the home's team meetings to work with staff and support their understanding of work being undertaken with each young person. This helps to ensure that young people receive consistent support, which promotes their emotional well-being.

In particular, young people have made very good progress in education. Each young person joined the home at a point when they were not engaging in education and had significantly reduced provision in place. However, all young people are now engaging well in education and are consistently achieving full-time attendance. One young person recently chose to take part in extra-curricular activities at school, during the half-term period. Staff closely support young people's education and liaise daily with school staff to ensure that they have a good understanding of young people's progress and any need for additional assistance. Achieving in education promotes young people's confidence and increases their life chances.

The provision of positive activities is a strength of this home. Each young person has an individual timetable in place detailing a variety of fun and fulfilling activities that they regularly take part in. Existing hobbies are supported and young people are encouraged to try new things. There is evidence of some positive work with young people to support their understanding of equality and diversity. Providing young people with opportunities to learn and have fun enhances their day-to-day lives and helps them grow in confidence.

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

There is evidence that young people are safer due to the care and support that they receive. Young people at high risk of criminal exploitation are kept safe and are supported to reduce risky behaviours, such as going missing from home. One young person has significantly reduced his use of alcohol and substances since his admission. A parent commented that she believed risks to her son had greatly reduced since he moved to the home.

The registered manager and staff work effectively with partner agencies to identify and manage risks to young people. A social worker described how the home was always prompt in reporting any concerns, and that it was keen to engage in discussions about how to promote young people's safety.

There is evidence of some positive work with young people to assist them in learning about keeping themselves safe. A mentor, experienced in working with young people identified as being vulnerable to gang involvement and criminal exploitation, is carrying out regular work with all the young people who live at the home. The young people are engaging well in this process and benefiting from this valuable learning.

All staff receive safeguarding training at the start of their employment. This training is regularly updated to ensure that they are kept up to date with changes in legislation or practice. Staff are able to identify safeguarding concerns and are confident in reporting procedures. One safeguarding concern has been identified since the home began operating. This was managed effectively and in partnership with the appropriate external agencies.

Staff have some understanding of the risks to young people's safety and well-being and are aware of specific concerns relating to individual young people. However, risk management requires some improvement to help ensure that young people are consistently protected from harm. Shortfalls were identified during the inspection, which include the failure to complete some risk assessments and management plans, despite an indication that these are required. For example, there have been some concerning incidents which have occurred when young people have been travelling in cars. However, an assessment of the risks has not been carried out and there is no guidance in place about how to minimise these risks in the future.

There are also examples of risk assessments which don't include all the relevant information available, and risk management plans that lack practical guidance for staff in maintaining young people's safety. This means that staff may not be fully aware of the action that they should take, to support young people in a safe manner. Failure to identify and implement plans to manage significant risks means that young people's safety and well-being is not consistently protected. As such, a requirement is raised.

The young people who live in the home get along generally well. However, there have been some bullying incidents, which have affected one young person in particular. Staff are aware of the potential for bullying situations to occur and monitor the young people on a day-to-day basis. Risk management plans are in place in relation to bullying, but

these need to include more practical guidance for staff, such as keeping young people apart when their behaviour is heightened. There is a process in place for logging bullying incidents but this has not always been used effectively. This has resulted in the registered manager being unable to effectively monitor the area in a consistent way. The registered manager was able to provide evidence that she has identified the need to manage bullying more effectively. She has taken actions, which include improvements in recording and monitoring. In addition, the registered manager has arranged for the staff team to attend additional training in managing bullying.

Young people who live at the home have a history of unsafe lifestyles, due to frequent missing episodes. The young people who currently live in the home have continued to go missing on occasion, but this has usually been for short durations, such as for one hour. When young people go missing for a significant amount of time, staff take appropriate action to safeguard them. Clear records are maintained which demonstrate effective liaison with relevant professionals and constant attempts to locate young people. Staff regularly carry out positive direct work with young people, to help them understand the risks of being missing from home.

Young people sometimes present challenging behaviours in the home. This usually takes the form of low-level, silly behaviour. However, behaviours do escalate at times, and there have been some instances of verbal and physical aggression and property damage. All staff receive training in managing young people's behaviours, which includes training in physical intervention for more serious situations. However, guidance in relation to individual strategies that are effective for each young person requires some improvement. Currently, this guidance is generic and lacks detail. Clear, individualised strategies would assist staff in developing a consistent and confident approach to managing young people's behaviour. Inconsistent behaviour support has the potential to negatively impact the progress of young people. Therefore, a requirement is raised in relation to this area.

Staff selection and recruitment processes are generally satisfactory. Prospective employees are required to undergo a variety of background checks prior to being offered a post. These include police record checks and previous employment references. Checks such as these help to ensure that employees are of suitable character. Applicants are also requested to provide an employment history. However, it was noted in a small number of examples that the employment histories were not complete, as they did not include the full date of previous job changes. It is recommended that complete histories are obtained so that any gaps in previous employment can be investigated.

Young people are provided with a good standard of accommodation. Regular safety checks are carried out to help ensure that any hazards are identified and addressed. There has been a recent concern regarding young people tampering with fire safety equipment. The registered manager confirmed that this matter was addressed in a prompt manner, and that all equipment was replaced within 24 hours. In addition, the registered manager has arranged for professionals from the local fire and rescue service to carry out some educational work with young people regarding fire safety.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There is a suitably experienced registered manager in place at the home. The registered manager is in the process of completing the relevant leadership and management qualification. The registered manager demonstrates a good understanding of her role and the aims and objectives of the home.

It is evident that the registered manager has developed positive relationships with young people, staff and external stakeholders. A parent commented that they found the registered manager to be very approachable and, as a result, they could comfortably share their views or concerns.

The registered manager demonstrates a good understanding of young people's needs. There is evidence to show that the management team responds effectively to changes in young people's needs and works positively with external partners to ensure that young people receive appropriate levels of support. Regular meetings take place between the home, education and clinical staff, which enable the teams to effectively review and plan all aspects of the young people's day-to-day care.

Young people benefit from stability and consistency. The registered manager ensures that young people receive their care from a consistent staff team that knows them well. Despite having some vacancies in the team, the registered manager has been able to maintain consistency through careful planning. For example, only one bank staff member is used in the home.

Staff express satisfaction with the training provided. There is a mandatory training programme in place which covers important aspects, such as behaviour support and safeguarding. Records show that all staff have completed their mandatory training, including one staff member who was very recently appointed. This staff member was complimentary about the training he had received and spoke highly of the induction process.

Over half the staff members hold nationally recognised qualifications in caring for children and young people, with the remainder of staff being supported to undertake them. The registered manager is able to recognise additional training needs in the team and, when these are identified, takes action to address them. For example, additional training in managing young people's relationships has been arranged. The staff team has recently completed a course in relation to supporting young people identified as being vulnerable to gang involvement and criminality. A number of staff commented that they found this learning very useful.

Staff express confidence in the management of the home and report a good level of support. Staff benefit from regular opportunities to meet as a team and are also provided with regular one-to-one supervision, where they can discuss practice matters, professional development and any concerns that they may have. Records demonstrate that any staff requiring additional support, in relation to their practice, receive this in a timely fashion.

During this inspection, some shortfalls were identified in relation to the standard of recording and reporting information. The standard of recording was variable. For

example, some records of incidents that had occurred lacked sufficient detail and were unclear. In other examples, information about who had completed records was inaccurate. Some important documents, such as risk assessments, had not been signed by staff, which meant there was no evidence that they had read and understood them. Failure to maintain accurate records could undermine the quality and safety of the service and, as such, a requirement is raised in relation to this matter.

There are systems in place which enable the registered manager to monitor safety and quality across the service. These include regular checks and audits. Due to shortfalls in record-keeping, internal monitoring processes have not always been fully effective. For example, the monitoring of bullying incidents across one time period was not accurate, as staff had not correctly logged incidents that had occurred. The registered manager has identified this issue and is taking steps to address it. At the time of the inspection, the registered manager had arranged some refresher training for staff in record-keeping.

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: 1257739

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care 4 Children Residential Services Ltd

Registered provider address: Care 4 Children, 1 Stuart Road, Bredbury Park Industrial Estate, Bredbury, Stockport SK6 2SR

Responsible individual: Dominic Tumelty

Registered manager: Danielle Maher

Inspector

Marie Cordingley, social care inspector

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