

1264016

Registered provider: Care 2 Share Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides up to six short-term/emergency placements. The registered provider supports placing authorities in assessing future placement or transitional needs of young people. The maximum period of placement is 42 days.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 March 2018

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: First Inspection

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:

- Staff invest in making positive relationships with young people. This builds up their trust, respect, confidence and self-esteem.
- Leaders and managers carefully assess new referrals to the home and ensure that new admissions do not disrupt the young people already living at the home.
- The home admits young people for a maximum period of 42 days for assessment. This helps placing authorities determine the most appropriate placement and in some cases enables a young person to return home.
- Leaders and managers have quickly linked into community resources and activities. This has resulted in young people attending the gym, getting involved in creative arts and feeling a sense of self-worth and purpose.
- Although this is a newly registered emergency home, the provider has other homes and established networks in East London. The leaders and managers work well with these networks to support young people.
- The home has steadily grown since its registration in September 2017, allowing the staff team to establish and work well together before increasing numbers. The conditions made at registration have been met.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Due to the short length of placement, ensuring that young people have satisfactory education provision is a challenge.
- The registered manager should challenge placing authorities when return home interviews are not offered to young people when they return from going missing from care.
- Risk assessments should include young people's views, and a condensed format should be available for staff to access.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
First inspection		

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

Recommendations

- Where the placing authority or another relevant person does not provide the input and services needed to meet a child's needs during their time in the home or in preparation for them leaving the home, the home must challenge them to meet the child's needs. Staff should act as champions for their children, expecting nothing less than a good parent would. The registered person should consider the use of an independent advocate if the child's needs are not being met. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 12, paragraph 2.8). In particular, this relates to offering return home interviews to young people and ensuring that education provision is offered.
- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the child's cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11). In particular, this relates to seeking young people's views on their risk assessments.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people receive high-quality and consistent care during their time at the home. The aim of the placement is to support the placing authority to assess the needs of young people during an emergency, such as a placement breakdown, or for a short-term admission to care. The home opened to admissions in September 2017 and since then has admitted 27 young people for assessment. During this time, three young people have returned home to the care of their families. The remainder have moved into foster placements, suitable long-term placements or semi-independence units.

A key strength of this home is the staff team. Staff work well together and offer consistent care and routines to young people. Despite placements only being short term, staff work hard to establish positive relationships that build up trust and security. Staff understand the need to make a short, sharp impact on young people in the time they have with them. Staff build relationships quickly by treating young people with respect, implementing firm but fair boundaries and letting young people know they are listening and care about them. Staff said that they feel there are many ways they can make a difference to young people's lives.

Young people make progress in the short time they spend at the home. The provider runs two other homes and has an established network in the local community. The registered manager has been able to use these networks to support young people to make progress. In addition, the registered manager and staff team have worked hard to build new contacts in the locality, which are supporting young people. A sexual health worker has visited and engaged young people by giving advice and appointments. The drug and alcohol team has been engaged to make a visit to the home to offer young people support and advice. The local ward police officer visits the home, to support staff and build relationships with the young people.

The staff team has explored and initiated activities in the local community and engaged young people in this. Staff have made links with the local YMCA, which allows young people to engage in gym activities, beauty therapy and swimming. Young people have been encouraged to engage in fitness training, creating healthy exercise and eating plans with staff support. One staff member said, 'I go along with them, motivate and support them, help them to introduce a routine, gain their views and ask them what they want out of attending.' The home also engages young people in a community project, called 'The Soul Project,' which is a music and film creative arts project. This helps to get young people involved in the community and learn new skills, and it encourages engagement and promotes self-esteem.

Due to the operating model of the home, it is a challenge to ensure that young people have appropriate education in place quickly. Leaders and managers are aware of this and are considering a number of options to ensure that education is available for young people living at the home. Staff at the home provide activities and resources to facilitate learning; however, this cannot be a substitute for mainstream education.

Young people are consulted at all stages of their short-term placements. They receive clear information when they arrive at the home. A children's guide and good induction help them to understand what to expect and what is expected of them. Staff support young people to attend important meetings such as placement planning and review meetings. All young people have a key worker who meets with them on a weekly basis and supports them during their time at the home. In addition, regular residents' meetings discuss communal issues in the home, such as menus and activity choices and anything else young people want to discuss. At the end of their placement, young people are encouraged to complete a feedback form about their time at the home. The registered manager and staff team use this feedback to make changes and improve the service.

The registered manager and staff team prepare young people, parents and professionals for the short-term nature of the placement. Regular meetings throughout the 42-day period help to ensure that all involved understand the placement objectives and focus on long-term planning. In many instances, this has been a transition to semi-independent living. Young people have help in learning self-care skills, such as cooking, doing their laundry and understanding how to manage finances, which helps them to develop the skills they need to live independently.

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

The registered manager and the staff team identify risks well. Risk assessment begins prior to any young person's admission to the home through a 'matching' risk assessment process. This assessment considers all risks and measures these against the needs of existing residents. The likely impact of admissions is discussed with the staff team. In addition, consideration is given to potential extra resources to ensure young people's safety. Assessments with their outcomes are recorded and show that many referrals are not accepted and the home often runs with vacancies to ensure that young people are not placed at any increased risk.

When young people first arrive at the home, the registered manager puts together a risk assessment, informed by referral information and by professionals and carers/parents who know the young person well. This document is shared with staff, but is not always shared with young people, nor does it routinely include their views. Risk assessments are comprehensive documents, requiring time to read and understand. The leaders and managers have identified that a more condensed version of risk assessments would be more accessible to staff and young people.

The home has an effective response to children who go missing from care. The registered manager and staff team understand the processes for reporting young people missing and work collaboratively with safeguarding partners to reduce this risk. The staff work hard to engage young people in activities and education and to build up positive relationships, which has helped stop young people from going missing so frequently. The level of young people going missing from the home has fluctuated, depending on the young people placed at the time. One police officer said that the staff are 'extremely well organised' and have a 'genuine care' and 'excellent knowledge' about the young people placed in their care. Police and placing authorities are advised promptly when young people return from being missing. The registered manager reminds placing authorities about their duty to offer a return home interview; however, these are not routinely happening for all young people.

The registered manager and staff team build relationships, trust and respect with young people. There are clear expectations about mutual respect and behaviour within the home. Risk assessments and behaviour management plans help staff to understand triggers for behaviour and give strategies to manage and reduce conflict. All staff receive training in managing challenging behaviour and physical restraint. The overall ethos of the home is to understand behaviours and to look behind the presenting behaviour for the root cause. Staff learn about the impact of early attachment difficulties and trauma on presenting behaviours and learn to understand young people and help them manage difficult feelings. One staff member said about young people, 'They know if you respect, listen and care about them. They respect you for putting in boundaries. They kick against them but we reinforce them and work as a team.'

Young people benefit from a clear safeguarding policy, which is at the centre of practice in this home. Staff spoken to understood their responsibility to safeguard young people and are aware of the home's whistleblowing policy. There is good training on offer for

staff, including the risks of child sexual exploitation, substance awareness and other relevant training, which meets the needs of specific children.

Recruitment processes ensure that appropriate checks for new staff coming to work in the home are undertaken. These processes help protect young people from exposure to unsafe people working in their home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

This privately owned home is one of three children's homes run by the same company. In addition, the company also operates semi-independence units and family assessment centres. Leaders and managers are committed, passionate and forward thinking and have worked together as an established management team for a number of years. The manager of this home has worked within the company in various roles for the past 17 years. She has for the past four years worked as the area manager and became the registered manager in September 2017. The registered manager has the skills, knowledge and expertise to run the home. She holds the level 4 diploma and is currently undertaking the level 5 diploma in leadership and management.

The registered manager is showing good organisation and leadership skills. This is particularly necessary given the short-term nature of placements and the 42-day timeframe. Commissioners using the service described good communication and expectations to ensure clear planning for young people moving on to placements that are more permanent.

The staff team is excellent; staff show enthusiasm and commitment for their work and are engaged with young people. Staff said that they feel supported and that they work well as a team. They described good induction, training and ongoing development and said that they are happy in their work. Other professionals, parents and young people all agreed that the staff team are offering high-quality care. The registered manager has captured excellent levels of feedback, all of which is very positive.

Leaders and managers know the young people well and are good advocates on their behalf. They challenge placing authorities when they feel that young people deserve a better service and they put young people in touch with advocates when they want to take matters further. Although the leaders and managers challenge, there should be an escalation of challenge when service provision does not improve. The leaders and managers are aware, for example, that education provision and the offer of return home interviews are areas where more challenge is needed on behalf of young people.

External monitoring of the service is regular and helps the leaders and managers to improve the service. They are reflective in their approach to issues that arise and have acted on recommendations to improve practice quickly. The registered manager compiles her own six-monthly quality of care review. This demonstrates her understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the running of the home. Leaders and managers have met the conditions set out at the registration visit. They use inspection and quality of care reports to inform practice going forward.

A key strength of this home is the leaders' and managers' capacity to work in partnership with others. This is a theme with professional and safeguarding partners, families and young people. There is an inclusive approach, which supports children's views and participation.

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: 1264016

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care 2 Share Limited

Registered provider address: 46 The Ridgeway, North Harrow, Harrow HA2 7QN

Responsible individual: Mehnaaz Chaudhary

Registered manager: Andrea Adolph

Inspector

Christine Kennet, social care inspector

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