

SC005751

Registered provider: Care Afloat Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private company and provides care for one child with social and emotional difficulties. The provider offers an education service and therapeutic support from an external contractor.

The manager was registered in April 2022.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 May 2022

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: 23 February 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/02/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
21/08/2019	Full	Good
24/04/2018	Full	Good
11/10/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The child is supported by staff who demonstrate a genuine commitment to meeting his needs. Staff work hard to motivate the child and to help him develop a more positive self-image. Their efforts have been rewarded over recent weeks with small but significant signs of progress being made.

The child said that he feels cared for and is much happier in himself since Ofsted inspectors last visited. He talked with enthusiasm about his recent holiday and all the fun and exciting activities that he had done with staff. Staff spoke about this experience being a significant turning point and how the child is spending more time with staff, friends and his girlfriend.

Staff work closely with teachers to understand and overcome barriers to learning. Adapted timetables that combine academic and life-skills learning are in place. These, along with the sensitive persistence of staff, have supported the child to slightly improve attendance in education. Further, creative work is required if the child is to achieve his full potential.

The child spoke candidly about some of the challenges that he faces daily, and how staff are helping him to overcome these. He says that he gets on well with staff and that they provide him with good support when he is feeling less than positive about himself. Although reluctant to engage, regular access to a therapist is available to the child. It is positive that, in addition to advice and guidance for staff, the therapist has started to deliver training to help staff to better understand and implement a trauma-informed approach.

The child is supported to keep in touch with the important people in his life. This includes staff taking the child to spend time with family members who live a significant distance from the home.

Work has started on improving the environment of the home, albeit at a very slow pace. It is pleasing to see that empty photo frames seen at the last inspection now contain photographs of the child and staff. However, except for the lounge, the home still does not appear to be homely or welcoming.

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

There have been no serious incidents, safeguarding concerns, complaints or allegations since the last inspection. Despite this, staff are not complacent in their safeguarding role and are suitably trained and knowledgeable in this respect.

Staff understand that children take risks as part of their social development. Planned and ad hoc conversations are used to help the child understand and better manage risks to himself, in the home and the community. The child is making positive

choices about keeping himself safe, and incidents of risk-taking behaviour are extremely rare.

The child is respectful of staff and the rules of the home. Daily living is underpinned by negotiation and compromise that consider the child's maturity and self-responsibility. The child's emotional fragility is understood by staff, who provide extra reassurance and support when required. This is becoming more purposeful as staff develop a more detailed understanding of working with children who have experienced significant trauma.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is registered for this home and another service that provides solo care. This arrangement is still developmental, with the manager trying to strike a balance between spending time at this home and her other service. She recognises that visibility to staff is an essential component of leadership, and that this needs to improve further if the progress made so far is to continue.

The manager has a good understanding of the home's strengths and improvement needs. She is working to an improvement plan that has been effective in starting to address the shortfalls from the previous inspection, including the requirements and recommendations. Relative to time passed, suitable progress has been made in this respect.

Staff are generally more positive about their work. The apathy seen at the previous inspection was less apparent, with staff saying that they feel more empowered and involved in care planning and the day-to-day running of the home. The deputy manager was particularly positive about how the manager is supporting him to develop and improve his management skills and knowledge.

The child benefits from the care and support of highly experienced staff who have worked together for several years. Staff receive regular supervision with an improved focus on their developmental needs. There is a good focus on providing staff with needs-specific training to improve their understanding of mental health, trauma-informed practice and self-harm.

Some improvements have been made to the quality of children's records and the way that they are organised. However, this has proven to be a significant challenge with several documents still missing, being incomplete and out of date. The use of complex language in documents, such as care plans and risk assessments, is reducing, making them more meaningful to the child.

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, the 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
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; and are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b))	9 June 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the house is homely, taking into consideration the child's individual tastes and personality. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff build on progress made and continue to support the child to improve education attendance. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.14)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are supported to further develop their skills and knowledge of mental health and trauma-informed practice. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.18)
- The registered person should ensure that the manager is visible and available to offer staff the necessary support and guidance they need. This should be planned and included on the staff rota and should consider when the deputy manager is not available. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.7)
- The registered person should ensure that children's records are written in a way that the child can understand and is helpful to child. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: SC005751

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care Afloat Limited

Registered provider address: 158-160 Birkrig, Digmoor Parade, Skelmersdale
WN8 9HP

Responsible individual: Michael Fletcher

Registered manager: Claire Russell

Inspector

Paul Scott, Social Care Inspector

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