

SC005751

Registered provider: Care Afloat Ltd.

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately run children's home. The home provides care and accommodation for one young person who has emotional and/or behavioural difficulties

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 October 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 **requires improvement to be good**

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

Date of last inspection: 20 December 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- A positive and emotionally warm environment with consistent boundaries provides the young person with the structure that she needs to develop a strong sense of belonging and emotional security. The young person enjoys

trusting and meaningful relationships with staff.

- The young person is confident enough to talk to staff about how they are feeling and to devise strategies with the support of staff to manage their feelings in a more productive manner.
- Good safeguarding practice protects the young person from harm. The young person feels safe. Well-established and effective partnerships with the local police and social workers ensure that when risks to the young person are identified they are managed safely.
- Staff are strong advocates for the young person's education. They strive to ensure that young people are engaged in education or training. They work closely with external agencies to help young people make positive decisions about their futures.
- Young people are well prepared for moving on to the next stage of their lives. They are confident, articulate and believe in what they can achieve.
- Staff work closely with the family of the young person. They work hard to develop positive relationships with them. This means that young people are able to keep in contact with their families and maintain close relationships with them.
- The new registered manager is committed to improving outcomes for young people. She has a clear understanding of the strengths of the provision and the areas for development.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Record keeping is not yet robust.
- Enhance the management arrangements in the home for when the registered manager is not available.
- Ensure that staff rotas clearly identify the hours staff are working and when the registered manager is in the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/12/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
28/06/2016	Full	Good
01/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10/06/2015	Full	Good

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
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; the details of the behaviour leading up to the use of the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ('the user'), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and the consequences of the measure. That within 5 days of the use of the measure the registered person or other authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(a)(ii)(vi)(vii)(c))	01/12/2017
Ensure that the registered person maintains 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)) In particular, ensure that conflicting information is updated and, when appropriate, removed.	01/12/2017
The registered person must maintain in the home the records in schedule 4 and ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37(2)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that a record of when the registered manager is actually working in the home and the actual times of when staff are on duty is maintained.	01/12/2017
The independent person must produce a report about a visit ('the independent person's report') which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded, and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44(4)(a)(b)) In particular, that the report is evaluative and helps the home to drive forward improvements and does not contain factual	01/12/2017

inaccuracies.	
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Recommendations

- Ensure the home meets the young people's basic day-to-day needs and provides a welcoming, supportive, and homely environment. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)
In particular, address the maintenance issues, including the worn carpet and peeling paint on the radiator in the lounge and dining room and the damaged tiles in the bathroom.
- Ensure that there are clear arrangements in place to maintain effective management when the registered manager is absent, off duty or on leave. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.20)
- Ensure that the registered person actively seeks independent scrutiny of the home and makes best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
In particular, that reports are evaluative, identify the strengths of the home, weaknesses, patterns and trends and the action taken to address this.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people benefit from consistent care, which enables them to reflect on their past and to develop positive coping and social skills. This has meant that for the young person currently living in the home, missing from care episodes have significantly reduced.

Good, supportive relationships between the young person and staff mean that she is confident to talk to staff about any concerns or worries she has. Staff and managers demonstrate both perseverance and determination to work through challenging times with the young person. They listen to her and provide encouragement and guidance. The young person said, 'Staff listen and talk to me about making the right choices.' Staff are optimistic and talk freely about the qualities and strengths of the young people whom they care for. A social worker said that, 'The staff have completed some really positive work with the young person.' This has been instrumental in preparing her for moving into her own home.

The young person said, 'I'm excited but also a bit scared about moving into my own home. However, the staff are going to give me support for the first few weeks, which

I'm really pleased about.' The young person has chosen her new home with the support of staff and has been excitedly choosing items she likes in anticipation of the move. She said that staff have helped her to manage her finances and she is certain that she can manage on a budget. She is confident to carry out a range of household tasks independently, such as doing her laundry, and preparing and cooking a range of meals.

The young person has grown in confidence since the last inspection. She is rebuilding her relationship with her family, although she admits that they get on better on the phone than face to face, but this has improved. The young person has made a number of positive friendships and she really enjoys the time she spends with her friends. This is a big achievement for the young person and she is more able to keep herself safe when she is out with her friends. Staff provide valuable support and guidance to her on how to keep safe and prepare her for moving into her own home.

Staff act as good parents. They make arrangements, in consultation with the young person, to collect her and her friends after a night out. This meant that the young person was at the designated pick-up point with her friends and staff were able to ensure that everyone got home safely.

The young person is very aware of her own healthcare needs and the importance of keeping up to date with medication. The young person does occasionally use recreational drugs. She is fully aware of the dangers of these and the possible consequences to her health and well-being. Staff have spent time discussing the dangers and the risks with the young person and have identified the specialist services available to help. The young person's healthcare needs are very well supported. She recently underwent a tonsillectomy and said that staff have really looked after her. She said that they reassured her when she went into the hospital, supported her throughout her stay, and made sure that she was safe when she returned home.

Staff are strong advocates for the young person's education. The young person has had a number of college placements and when there have been problems at college, staff have provided appropriate support. In addition, staff worked tirelessly with the young person to find a new college placement when it was needed. She is now really enjoying a building course. Staff said that she is enjoying this and can see the additional benefits of learning new skills as she moves into her own home.

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

Safeguarding is a priority for the staff in the home. Staff are trained in child protection and safeguarding. They are clear on the action to take should they have a concern about the young person. This helps to keep the young person safe.

The young person said that she felt safe and secure in the home. The manager and staff have a clear understanding of safeguarding issues and consistently review safe working practices to help them to meet the individual young person's needs. Staff are alert to the potential risks, and encourage the young person to let them know if she has any worries or concerns.

Staff help the young person to explore why social exchanges go wrong, and sensitively encourage the young person to examine her own behaviour and the impact this can have on others. Staff provide a safe environment for this difficult work to take place. Consequently, the young person responds positively to their efforts to make progress at a pace that suits her. A strength of the home is the consistent messages provided by staff. This is possible because staff have developed an open culture in which all staff contribute their thoughts about each plan of care for the young person, and together they reach an agreement that is child-centred and reflective in practice.

There has been a significant decrease in incidents of the young person being missing from home. This is because the staff and young person worked together to come to acceptable arrangements about when she can stay overnight with friends. Staff act as any good parent would and contact her friends' parents and check with them that she is able to stay there. This means that they are able to safely manage risks. A social worker said, 'This has been a massive achievement for the young person, which is effectively protecting her from potential harm.'

Clear boundaries are in place to manage challenging and risky behaviour. Staff work well together as a team. Their consistent approach helps the young person to understand the home's rules and why these are in place. The young person does struggle with her emotions at times and can become argumentative. However, in recent months she has grown in confidence. She is now able to walk away from incidents and think about what she is doing before incidents escalate. For example, she called staff to collect her from college early as another young person was agitating her. She said that she knew she had to remove herself from the situation before she became angry. Staff said that this is something she would not have been able to do a few months ago.

There are some maintenance issues in the home that are yet to be addressed. These include the missing tiles in the bathroom, the peeling paint on the radiator and worn carpets. These issues are detracting from the homely environment staff are striving to maintain. Sound recruitment practices are in place, which help keep young people safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

There have been a number of changes in the management of the home since the last inspection. The new registered manager has been in post since June 2017 and is in the process of completing a level 5 qualification in leadership and management. A large number of the shortfalls identified in the records occurred prior to her coming into post. The registered manager has herself identified record-keeping as an area of improvement and has been taking steps to address this with the staff team through supervision and team meetings. The registered manager is creating a revised and bespoke development plan for the home based upon the strengths and areas for development.

The registered manager oversees two homes. A team coordinator supports her. Currently, there is insufficient information to demonstrate that the registered manager has daily oversight over both homes. This is because there is no system in place to

record the time that she spends at each home. The rota system shows when staff are on duty, but not the actual times of the shifts. In addition, other managers in the company provide management cover. However, this has resulted in the registered manager covering four homes in August 2017. This meant that she spent very little time in her own homes, because of an emergency which took precedence. This does not provide effective managerial oversight.

Staff have regular opportunities through practice-related supervision and team meetings to reflect on the young person's progress and their own performance. The registered manager supports and encourages staff to develop expertise through training relevant to the needs of the young person, such as safeguarding, the risks of child sexual exploitation and behaviour management. The staffing arrangements ensure that there are sufficient knowledgeable and experienced staff available to meet the young person's needs. The young person has a strong say in what happens in the home. She is instrumental in planning for her future. As a result, the young person feels valued.

The statement of purpose is current and reflects the care and support provided to the young person. This is shared effectively with the placing authorities and carers so that they have realistic expectations of what the home can do. The children's guide is informative and on arrival at the home, the young person receives a copy.

Monitoring by the independent person is not effective. This is because it contains factual inaccuracies, such as commenting on a fire evacuation that took place two weeks after the visit. The independent person does not provide sufficient challenge to the home. They have reported since January 2017 that the young person is awaiting a hospital referral. Discussions with the registered manager indicate that this has been offered and the young person refused. However, this is not reflected in the independent person's report, and neither is the independent person's opinion as to how well young people are safeguarded and how the home promotes their well-being present in the report.

Record-keeping is not consistently robust. There are shortfalls within the physical intervention and sanctions records. For example, they do not identify the effectiveness of the sanction or intervention. Other records, such as the healthcare plan, placement plan and risk assessments, contain conflicting information and do not contain the most up-to-date information. This does not provide clarity in the records and leaves them open to interpretation. However, these are recording issues and do not currently have an impact upon the care provided. This is because of the stable staff team, which works well together and knows the young person well.

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: SC005751

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care Afloat Ltd.

Registered provider address: Care Afloat Ltd, 158 Birkrig, Skelmersdale, Lancashire
WN8 9HP

Responsible individual: Michael Fletcher

Registered manager: Joy Higham

Inspector

Chris Scully, social care inspector

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