

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	28 June 2016
Unique reference number	SC005751
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Care Afloat Ltd
Registered provider address	158 Birkrig, Digmoor, Skelmersdale, Lancashire WN8 9HP

Responsible individual	Michael Fletcher
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Anthony Kyem

Inspection date	28 June 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires Improvement

SC005751

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people make considerable progress, taking into account their individual starting points, across all aspects of their welfare and their physical, social, emotional and behavioural development. Care planning and practice are highly personalised to meet the specific needs of the young people.
- Young people enjoy exceptionally good relationships with staff, and they develop and sustain their positive attachments. They benefit from continuity of care and have consistency and stability in their lives. Young people are developing a strong sense of permanence and belonging.
- Staff promote the needs of young people effectively and enthusiastically. They ensure that they benefit from the best possible help and all-round support. Young people become increasingly safer, as a result of the actions staff take to support and protect them. They feel safe and have a strong sense of personal safety.
- Staff have improved the garden areas to the front and rear of the home by adding various flowers, plants and shrubs. Artificial grass is soon to be laid to the rear garden, and there is a new seating area for young people to sit and socialise with staff.
- The home provides young people with a physically safe, appropriately secure, warm, comfortable and homely environment. Health and safety matters are addressed effectively, to promote a safe environment for young people.
- Young people feel listened to by staff, who actively involve them in key decisions so that they are able to contribute to and influence the running of the home.
- There are effective systems for monitoring the home's activities to raise standards and improve outcomes for young people. However, some independent monitoring reports have not been sent to Ofsted, as regulations require. This is an oversight in the absence of a registered manager.
- An application to register a suitably qualified and experienced manager is currently being completed by the acting manager of the home.

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

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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.

Requirements	Due date
Independent person visits and reports Ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to: (a) HMCI (b) upon request, the local authority for the area in which the home is located (c) the placing authorities of children (d) the registered provider and, if applicable, the registered manager (e) the responsible individual. (Regulation 44 (1) (7))	29 July 2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and the principles as set out in 9.35 are respected. ('The Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)
- The home should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce-related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1. The plan should detail the necessary management and staffing structure, the experience and qualifications of staff currently working within the staffing structure and any further training required for those staff, to enable the delivery of the home's statement of purpose. ('The Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- Actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring to ensure continuous improvement. This relates specifically to reviewing the home's development plan with a clearer focus on improvement. ('The Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph

10.24)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for one young person with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is privately owned and managed.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
1 March 2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10 June 2015	Full	Good
10 February 2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
28 November 2014	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people make considerable progress, taking into account their individual starting points, across all aspects of their welfare and their physical, social, emotional and behavioural development. They benefit from well-planned, highly individualised care that promotes their needs effectively. They benefit from highly effective support that contributes to change and improvement in their lives. Staff work effectively and enthusiastically with young people. They provide them with continuity of care so that they have stability and have consistency in their lives. Staff build exceptionally good relationships with young people, providing them with a safe, secure, supportive and nurturing environment. Young people attend alternative educational provision regularly, with good support and encouragement from staff. An independent reviewing officer reports, 'It appears that staff have formed very positive relationships with the young person and that she has been able to settle well. The staff appear to understand her needs and to have formed effective strategies for working with her. I have no concerns about her safety within her placement and believe that all that is possible is being done to safeguard her while she is at contact.' Young people's educational attendance has improved considerably and their progress is significant, taking into account their starting points. Young people have done extremely well in their education, having completed their GCSEs, with positive results. Their outcomes have been improved as a result of the high quality support provided to them. Staff are ambitious and have consistently high aspirations for young people. An independent reviewing officer reports, 'The young person has been able to complete her GCSEs this year despite huge disruption in her education history. She needed stability and resilient care and this has been provided.' Young people's needs arising from race, culture, faith, religion and ethnicity are positively identified and met. As a result, young people are supported to express themselves as individuals and they are able to practise their traditions and their cultural and religious beliefs. Staff facilitate contact so that young people sustain their close relationships with the people who are most important to them. Staff maintain positive relationships with the families of the young people. Young people report, 'It's been good. I've been going out a lot and doing stuff with	

staff. They've sorted out my education and my contact with my family has improved. I think my relationships with staff are quite good. [staff name] my key worker gets on really well with my family.'

Staff actively listen to what young people have to say. They make time for them and act on their reasonable requests. They involve them in key decisions and take their views, feelings and opinions seriously. Young people know how to make a complaint and their rights are promoted effectively. There have been no complaints since the last inspection.

Young people enjoy good health and they are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians, and have access to these services when they need them. Specialist support, for example counselling and therapy, is made readily available for young people who require more intensive support. Dialogue between staff and therapists is good, and this supports young people in their therapeutic journey and promotes their emotional and psychological well-being.

Young people are taught about key health issues so that they know how to lead and maintain a healthy lifestyle. They are encouraged to eat healthily and they have their special dietary needs identified and met. Young people make positive lifestyle decisions and are learning to take responsibility for their own health.

Risk-taking behaviours, such as self-harming and drug and alcohol use, have decreased significantly. Medical consent is in place and staff are clear about what health decisions and responsibilities are delegated to them.

Young people are taught practical skills, such as shopping, cooking and budgeting, to promote their readiness for independence. They are allowed to take appropriate risks to promote their growth and natural development. Staff provide them with positive activities and young people enjoy spending quality time with staff.

Young people report, 'We went out for a meal and had fake cocktails: that was good. Compared to other places I've lived, I'd give the home 8 or 9 out of ten... I'd say it's happy, funny and interesting.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people are kept safe and they feel safe at the home. Staff consistently prioritise the safety of young people and demonstrate a good awareness of safe working practice. The use of clear risk assessment, effective behaviour management strategies and consistent rules and boundaries contribute to the	

safety and well-being of young people.

Young people report, 'I used to get arrested a lot for assaulting staff. They've really helped me in education... It's not too strict, but you know what the rules are. When you're good, they praise you and help you out and stuff. I've got no complaints.'

Young people become increasingly safer as a result of the actions staff take to support and protect them. They don't go missing from care or place themselves at risk of exploitation or significant harm. Young people are effectively safeguarded and protected.

Young people are protected from abuse and all other forms of significant harm. Staff are trained in child protection and know how to identify abuse, deal with allegations and report suspected abuse. They maintain highly effective partnerships with schools, police and other safeguarding agencies to promote the safety of young people.

There have been no significant incidents since the last inspection. However, should a significant incident take place, the acting manager knows they have a duty to report such matters to the appropriate authorities charged with a duty to protect young people. Since the last inspection, there have been no allegations of abuse or referrals to children and young people's services.

Staff promote young people's positive behaviour through the use of praise, encouragement and rewards. The use of sanctions is kept to an absolute minimum and restraint is only ever used to protect young people from actual harm. However, there was one sanction and a particular consequence used that involved temporarily restricting the young person's liberty, by denying them access to the office to retrieve their mobile phone. This incident was not recorded as a restraint at the time and the removal of the young person's phone was about compliance, and was not restorative in nature. This was an isolated event and had no negative effect on young people.

Health and safety matters are addressed effectively. Young people benefit from a safe, appropriately secure, warm, comfortable and homely environment. The staff have personalised the home in accordance with the wants, feelings and wishes of young people. As a result, young people develop a real sense of ownership and belonging.

Staff have completely revamped the front and rear gardens with flowers, plants, shrubs and a new seating area. This has created a comfortable outdoor space for young people to sit and spend quality time socialising with staff.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires Improvement
The registered manager has left the home since the last inspection. Ofsted was promptly notified of their absence and informed of the contingency arrangements for another registered manager to deputise in their absence. The acting manager is already registered for another children's home. They are in the process of applying for their registration for this particular home. They are suitably experienced and well qualified. The home meets the aims and objectives of its statement of purpose. However, the statement requires minor amendment to include the actual qualifications of individual staff that work at the home. All but one member of staff are suitably qualified. The recommendation from the last inspection has been addressed and met. Young people now have pathway plans to promote their readiness for independence and personal education plans to help them achieve their aspirations and educational goals. Young people's needs are prioritised effectively. The home is able to evidence and demonstrate significant change and improvement in young people's lives. The home maintains highly effective partnerships with the families of the young people, schools, social workers and other professional agencies to champion their specific needs and ensure that they benefit from the best possible help and all round support. The acting manager demonstrates effective and strong leadership of the home's operation. The performance of the home is managed efficiently and effectively. There are effective arrangements for routinely monitoring the conduct and performance of the home. The acting manager tracks the progress that young people make and ensures that staff deliver a high quality service for young people. They escalate concerns and challenge other professional agencies that fail to deliver the services or support that young people need. They work in close partnership with the wider professional community to meet young people's specific needs and ensure that they benefit from the best possible help and support. Independent monitoring and scrutiny of the home's performance is undertaken each month to review the standard and quality of young people's care. This enables the acting manager to understand the home's strengths and weaknesses and take appropriate action to secure its improvement. Development plans are in place, and although these effectively demonstrate the home's many qualities and strengths, they do not effectively identify its capacity for improvement. The staff team is effectively supported by the home's deputising manager. They benefit from regular, professional supervision and are well supported in their roles and in the work that they routinely perform. The manager has clear expectations of staff and they channel their efforts and enthusiasm effectively. Staff are well trained and most are suitably qualified. However, existing training	

plans for this year are limited, in terms of the availability and delivery of more specialist training for the development of staff skills, knowledge and professional development. All staff have completed their induction and mandatory training and they use this knowledge well to inform their practice with young people.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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