

SC006010

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 emotional and social difficulties. The organisation offers an education service and therapeutic support from an external contractor.

The manager was registered in September 2019.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 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	outstanding
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 6 May 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/05/2021	Full	Good
30/01/2020	Full	Good
22/08/2018	Full	Good
01/12/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

One child has left the home since Ofsted last visited. Although the ending to the placement was sudden and unplanned, the child did make progress in many aspects of his life. A professional said: 'The placement was mostly positive. Staff took a multi-agency approach to addressing [name of child's] needs and managing risk. [Name of child] still comments about feeling cared for.'

The child now living at the home is settled and happy. She has made strong attachments with the staff and developed a genuine sense of belonging in a relatively short period of time. The child said: 'Everyone is so chilled, and I don't feel like I am in care. The house looks and feels like a normal house, and this is the most relaxed and calm I have felt in a long time.'

Staff support children to attend school. They work closely with education professionals to ensure barriers to learning are reduced. This approach has been effective in supporting one child to re-engage in his learning and another to secure a place at college. A social worker said, 'Staff are good at supporting [name of child] with her goals. They have focused on her strengths and are helping her to fill in the gaps and prepare for her exams.'

Children have good access to healthcare services. Their known and emerging health needs are met. This includes regular access to a therapist, who is available to provide children with one-to-one support. The therapist is also available to offer guidance, training and advice to staff.

Children are encouraged and supported to become more independent. Opportunities for learning life skills, such as cooking and budgeting, are part of the everyday routine. There is a strong focus on planning for the future. For example, staff are currently helping and supporting the child to get a part-time job. This is so that she can pay for driving lessons and learn to drive, which has been an aspiration since she was young. A parent said, 'Staff take on board what [name of child] wants and are focused on preparing her for the future.'

Children are given good support to keep in touch with the important people in their lives. Family members are made to feel welcome when they visit the home. Staff are continually looking for ways to improve or increase the frequency of contact. A parent said: 'This home is far better than her last home. [Name of child] has changed so much and is doing amazingly. Spending time with her is a pleasure and she is more like the daughter I knew.'

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

Care practice is underpinned by policies and procedures that are designed to protect children from harm. Risk management plans are detailed. They consider past

behaviours of concern and include strategies that have been effective in managing and reducing some risk-taking behaviours.

Staff talk to children about their individual needs. They provide learning opportunities in relation to offending behaviour, risk of exploitation and e-safety. Staff strive to achieve a good balance between keeping children safe and the need for children to take age-appropriate risks. A professional said: 'Staff did a lot of good work to change [name of child's] thinking. Another said, 'Staff are supporting [name of child] to stay safe. I have seen her come on leaps and bounds, sticking to the rules and safely using her mobile phone.'

Following children being reported missing, staff have completed a small number of bedroom searches at the request of the police. However, search records are insufficiently detailed. For example, they do not make clear the rationale for searching the child's bedroom or that the child has been informed of the search when they return.

Staff have high expectations of children. Programmes of support are highly individualised, with a clear focus on promoting and rewarding positive behaviour. House rules are applied flexibly to promote proportionate responses to challenging behaviour. On the one occasion that restraint was used, it was used caringly and in the best interests of the child.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Effective leadership promotes an ethos and culture of high aspiration and positivity. The registered manager and the staff team demonstrate an unconditional can-do attitude to improving the lives of the children. The progress children make is testament to this.

The manager is also registered for a second home run by the organisation. This arrangement works because of the experience and skills of the deputy manager and staff team.

Well-planned and purposeful introductions ensure that new staff are inducted well. Staff are highly complimentary about the manager. They describe her as being solution-focused and always available. Staff receive regular formal supervision. However, supervision records contain a lot of repeated information. Consequently, they do not evidence developmental progress or how the individual can improve their practice.

Staff have access to a good range of training opportunities. Mandatory training is kept up to date, ensuring that staff maintain their core skills. Needs-led training is quickly sourced and team meetings are used to enhance staff knowledge. This has been effective in helping staff to understand the complexities of self-harm and autism spectrum disorder. However, two staff have not completed training in child exploitation and some refreshers are overdue.

Excellent partnership working is maintained with parents and health, education and safeguarding professionals and other agencies. The concept of 'team around the child' is consistently promoted. The manager and staff advocate strongly to ensure that each child receives the maximum support possible.

The manager is fully involved in all aspects of care planning. Monitoring activity is focused on ensuring that staff are implementing children's plans to meet their needs and maximise their progress. However, the six-monthly quality of care review does not reflect the same level of scrutiny and is lacking in evaluation and critical challenge. As a result, targets for the following six months are insufficiently challenging for a home that aspires to be outstanding.

Suitable action has been taken to address the requirements and the recommendation made at the last inspection. Consequently, education attendance, fire safety and medication records have improved.

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
In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (2)(c)) Specifically, take a more evaluative and critically challenging approach to completing the quality of care review, and that any resulting actions reflect the aspiration to be an outstanding home.	16 June 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when searching a child's room, the reason for conducting the search is clearly outlined in the record of the search. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.20)
- The registered person should ensure that staff complete or refresh training in child exploitation. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.5)
- The registered person should ensure that supervision records provide an accurate account of each supervision session. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.4)

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: SC006010

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: Anita Higham

Inspector

Paul Scott, Social Care Inspector

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