

SC006011

Registered provider: Care Afloat Limited.

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is owned and operated by a private company.

Inspection dates: 24 to 25 January 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and/or the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 16 November 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is inadequate because:

- The registered manager and staff are not alert to all of the risks that young people face. Consequently, young people have not been safeguarded from risks relating to internet safety, child sexual exploitation and potential fire-starting.
- Young people's individual risk assessments are not robust. They do not assess all potential risks or identify appropriate safeguarding measures. Furthermore, risk assessments are not followed in practice, which places young people at risk.
- A physical intervention record was not completed in line with legislation. Staff and young people were not given the opportunity to discuss the intervention with the registered manager and the responsible individual of the home. Furthermore, there was no evidence of effective evaluation of the intervention.
- The condition of young people's bedrooms is poor. The rooms are dirty and untidy. The young people do not have suitable furniture to store their personal belongings. This does not provide young people with a safe, comfortable and nurturing environment.
- The approach to behaviour management at the home does not always promote positive behaviour. Consequences for negative behaviour are not always recorded and the manager and staff are unclear about the purpose and the intended impact of the consequences used.
- Staff members do not work effectively with other professionals to ensure that relevant information is shared. Consequently, young people do not receive the most appropriate support and intervention to meet their needs.
- Educational progress is limited for some young people and they are not always supported effectively or encouraged to attend school on a regular basis. The home has failed to gain sufficient information in relation to one young person's education prior to him moving into the home. Consequently, the staff do not know if he is making progress or not.
- The staff do not always respond to the views, wishes and feelings expressed by young people, such as concerns about their education.
- Admission and discharge records do not contain the required information about young people's new addresses. As a result, for one young person, this has prevented the manager from forwarding their belongings on to them.
- Staff supervision does not take place on a regular basis in order to allow members of staff to reflect on their practice and to consider their developmental needs.
- The reviewing and monitoring systems in the home are weak. This does not allow the manager to identify the strengths and weaknesses, themes and

trends, and areas for development at the home.

- The requirements and recommendations from the last inspection have not all been suitably addressed.
- The regulator has not received the internal and external monitoring and review reports. An updated statement of purpose has not been submitted; this was a requirement at the last inspection.

The children's home's strengths

- The registered manager has improved the admission process for young people moving to the home. This includes a more robust assessment of young people's needs, which helps the matching process.
- The young people feel that they have positive relationships with the manager and staff.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/11/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
26/04/2016	Full	Good
23/02/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
28/07/2015	Full	Requires improvement

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; seek to input services required to meet each child's need; seek to maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(d))	30/03/2018
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children and that they use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; provide to children personal items that are appropriate for their age and understanding; ensure that the premises used for the purpose of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(b)(iv)(viii)(c)(i))	30/03/2018
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training	30/03/2018

targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible; and that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning. (Regulation 8 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(viii)(b))	
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; that the home's day to day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and protect each child effectively from harm; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(vi)(b)(d))	02/03/2018*
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—	02/03/2018*

lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(h))	
The registered person must keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(b))	30/03/2018
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)(c))	30/03/2018
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 name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ('the user') and any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ('the authorised person')— has spoken to the user about the measure; has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that	30/03/2018

they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(b)(c))	
The registered person must maintain in the home the records in schedule 4. (Regulation 37 (1)(2)(a)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the register of admissions and discharges contains details of the child's address immediately before admission to the home and the child's address on leaving the home.	30/03/2018
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The registered person must ensure that the independent person produces 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. The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— HMCI. (Regulation 44 (1)(4)(5)(7)(a))	30/03/2018
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ('a quality of care review') at least every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided to children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided to children. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and actions which the registered person intends to take as a	30/03/2018

result of the quality of care review ('the quality of care review report')

The registered person must supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review was completed.

(Regulation 45 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c)(3)(4)(a))

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendation

- 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)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Poor safeguarding practice, ineffective and inconsistent management and a lack of staff stability have significantly affected young people's overall experiences and progress. Parts of the home's environment are poor. Young people's bedrooms are dirty and untidy. One bedroom window has green mould on it. Repairs to doorframes and skirting boards are outstanding. There is a lack of suitable storage for young people in their bedrooms and furniture is damaged. The home's daily routine does not support the young people to live in a clean, warm, safe and nurturing environment.

Education progress for young people is varied. The home does not have effective systems in place to support young people with their education. Poor night-time routines result in young people often feeling too tired to get out of bed for school in the mornings. Young people are often left in bed until late afternoon, with little encouragement from staff to get them up and ready for the day ahead. Consequently, young people do not gain clear expectations around the need to attend education. They are also not engaging in suitable structured activities during school times or being consistently encouraged to reach their full potential. The home does not have effective systems in place to measure the progress young people make in education. The staff are unclear about one young person's education history prior to him moving into the home and have not been sufficiently proactive in obtaining this information. Another young person has spoken to staff about feeling pressured and anxious about his education and the home failed to address this with the school, despite informing the young person they would do this. Consequently, the home cannot be confident that the young person is receiving the appropriate support in school to manage his anxieties.

The health needs of the young people are not always met well. When young people refuse to attend health appointments the staff do not take effective action to address this. For example, a young person refused to attend appointments with the dentist and his general practitioner on a number of occasions. It is unclear what action staff have taken to support and encourage the young person to attend the appointments or to overcome any possible anxiety the appointments may provoke. Furthermore, staff do not promote health education through direct work with the young people on unmet health needs, such as difficulty with sleeping or feeling anxious.

The views, wishes and feelings of the young people are not central to the running of the home. Placement plans do not include young people's views about how their needs are being met in the placement. Placement plans do not adequately reflect young people's individual needs. Furthermore, there is little evidence to show that the young people look at and understand the plans, assessments and records that are in place for them. When actions are agreed between staff and young people during key-work sessions, such as raising with the manager the concerns a young person had about the arrival of another young person, these are not consistently followed through. This demonstrates that although the staff listen to the young people they do not always take the agreed action to address their views, wishes and feelings. However, the young people do report positive relationships with the manager and staff.

Two young people have left the home in an unplanned way since the last inspection because of safeguarding concerns. Consequently, the manager has improved the planning process for new admissions to the home to enable a more robust assessment of young people's needs to be in place. The home's planning for admissions document is now more detailed and transitions into the home are undertaken at a slower pace, which helps the matching and consideration of compatibility. The register for young people moving in and out of the home does not include all young people's most recent address before being accommodated at the home, or their address on leaving the home, in line with regulations. The home still has some belongings for a young person who has left the home and they are unable to forward these on to him, as they do not have his new address.

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

Safeguarding practice in the home is poor and does not promote the welfare and safety of the young people. The registered manager and staff have failed to follow child protection procedures to address serious safeguarding concerns. Furthermore, the manager and staff do not always help the young people to recognise risk to keep themselves and others safe. Shortfalls in the reporting and recording of serious safeguarding incidents weaken safeguarding practice and have resulted in some matters not being investigated. Consequently, young people are not adequately safeguarded and are placed at continued risk.

The home's approach to managing internet safety is poor and does not adequately safeguard young people. For example, a significant incident occurred whereby

inappropriate footage was downloaded onto the home's smart television. The manager and staff did not take appropriate action to address this. Safeguarding professionals were not informed and the footage remained on the smart television where it could potentially still be accessed. The manager and staff failed to show that they have a sufficient understanding of the risks posed to young people because of exposure to inappropriate use of the internet and/or access to unsuitable material or images. Consequently, the manager and staff are not alert to what the young people are accessing on the internet and when or how they can access it. This leaves young people vulnerable to exposure to inappropriate content.

Staff members also failed to demonstrate a sufficient understanding and awareness of the indicators of potential grooming and the link to possible child sexual exploitation for the young people living in the home. For example, a young person was given money by an unknown adult male from a local public house to buy a mobile phone. When this was explored further, the registered manager stated that the adult male has given other young people living in the home money too. The manager and staff did not identify this as potentially either a grooming or child sexual exploitation risk and were unable to show that they had taken this matter sufficiently seriously. Furthermore, the risks associated with the nearby public house are not incorporated in the home's location risk assessment.

Because of the current risks relating to fire-setting at the home, there is a system in place whereby daily fire alarm checks should be undertaken. However, the absence of some records relating to these demonstrate that these do not always take place. There continue to be concerns in relation to the potential risk of fire at the home. For example, overflowing bins in young people's bedrooms present as a potential fire hazard. Consequently, young people and staff are not safeguarded effectively from the risk of fire.

Risk assessments do not include all known risks for each young person. For example, for one young person, the risks relating to child sexual exploitation and/or potential grooming are not included. There is also limited detail about the level of risks and whether they are current, and there is limited detailed information about the strategies in place to manage these. Risk assessments are not routinely followed by staff. For example, in one case a young person's risk assessment states that he should have 'strict supervision' while using the internet. However, he has been allowed to use the internet upstairs in the home without staff supervision on more than one occasion. The registered manager was not aware that the young people could access the internet upstairs at the home. Furthermore, not all staff have signed the risk assessments in place for the young people to demonstrate that they have read and understood them. Consequently, this does not safeguard the young people effectively.

Behaviour management at the home is ineffective and does not promote positive behaviour from the young people. One young person told inspectors that they did not think the regular behaviour management strategy of turning off the electricity to young people's bedrooms when they refuse to attend education is fair and that his views have not been sought about this measure. Furthermore, this is not recorded as a sanction or

consequence at the home. A new incentive has been introduced so that the young people can earn up to one pound a day for attending education. This is clearly not working for one young person as he is not motivated by money. A member of staff confirmed that they are aware that this is not an effective incentive. However, no action has been taken to implement an alternative incentive. The records relating to consequences do not always include an evaluation from the manager or staff of the appropriateness or effectiveness of their use. The young people have not had their views on any of the consequences recorded. Therefore, behaviour management does not support and encourage the young people to make positive changes to their behaviour.

Staff have failed to make a record of all incidents of physical intervention as required. These shortfalls in the home's records weaken scrutiny of the measures of control used by staff. Furthermore, they hinder any potential investigation into staff practice, should a young person make an allegation against staff following such incidents. For example, for one young person and staff involved in an intervention, they were not given the opportunity to debrief following the incident. During the inspection, it also became apparent that the registered manager felt that this intervention was not necessary. This means that there was a missed opportunity at the time of the intervention to explore this event and ensure that there is safe practice in relation to the use of physical intervention at the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Since the last inspection, a new manager has been appointed. She has been managing the home for 12 months. There was a significant delay in her submitting her application to Ofsted for registration as the manager. However, she has recently been successful in her application.

The manager has failed to adequately address all of the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection. For example, the regulator has still not received the home's quality of care review or statement of purpose. There continue to be shortfalls in the response to and recording of physical intervention at the home. There continues to be a lack of partnership working with those who play a role in protecting and caring for the young people or in escalating concerns. Consequently, young people are not safeguarded or making good progress. The lack of effective action to address the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection demonstrates poor management and that there are ineffective systems in place at the home.

The monitoring and review systems at the home are weak and have failed to identify some of the shortfalls identified during this inspection. Internal quality assurance does not take place regularly and, as a result, the quality and standard of care have fallen to unacceptable levels. The manager has not reviewed records at the home or evaluated incidents that have occurred. She is not fully aware of specific issues relating to the young people, such as any worries they may have or safeguarding issues. Consequently, she has missed opportunities to identify shortfalls and ensure that the young people are receiving the right support and intervention to meet their needs and reduce risk. The

monthly reports from the independent person, in relation to whether young people are safeguarded effectively and how the home promotes the well-being of young people, are not routinely sent to Ofsted in line with regulation. Therefore, the regulatory body is not always aware of any shortfalls, themes or trends occurring at the home and how the home intends to make improvements to address these.

The registered manager and staff do not collaborate effectively with other professionals to ensure that the young people's needs are met or that they are safeguarded. They do not always ensure that placing social workers are kept up to date on the experiences and progress of young people. A social worker said, 'I do not receive regular updates from the home on the young person's progress like I do from other children's homes.' The social worker confirmed that this is something she has recently asked for and expects from the home. The young person has started building his independence skills and it is important that the social worker is kept up to date on his progress, as this will inform care planning for him.

There have been a number of changes to the staff team since the last inspection. All of the staff apart from one have moved from other homes in the company and so come with some relevant experience. However, a member of staff new to the company has no experience of working with children or young people. There was little exploration of his history and gaps in employment during the recruitment process, which would have helped in making the decision when assessing his suitability for the role. The staff spoken to during the inspection say that they feel supported. Team meetings are held on a regular basis and staff are up to date with mandatory training. However, they do not receive regular supervision in line with the company's own timescales. There is a particular shortfall for the new member of staff who has no experience of working with children or young people. He has had one supervision session since he started working at the home around three months ago.

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: SC006011

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care Afloat Limited.

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

Responsible individual: Michael Fletcher

Registered manager: Carol McKenna

Inspectors

Lisa Mulcahy, social care inspector

Marina Tully, social care inspector

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