

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	28/07/2015
Unique reference number	SC006011
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Care Afloat Ltd.
Registered person address	158 Birkrig, SKELMERSDALE, Lancashire, WN8 9HP

Responsible individual	Michael Fletcher
Registered manager	Peter Mahon
Inspector	Charlie Bamber

Inspection date	28/07/2015
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	Requires improvement
The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC006011

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is requires improvement because:

- Young people make progress in some areas but staff are not yet able to engage with the young people to effectively engage them in activities or spend time inside the home with them. This results in the young people not having the opportunity to develop close and trusting relationships with staff.
- Young people do not engage in any organised leisure activities, sports or hobbies. They rarely participate in any planned activities and staff are not sufficiently proactive in encouraging their engagement.
- Young people have very good attendance at their educational provision. However, actual engagement in education for some has declined and for others remains inconsistent.
- Young people smoke cigarettes and are suspected of smoking cannabis. The staff team make little effort to deter young people from smoking and do not offer support for young people to cease.
- Some young people are very reluctant to engage in health appointments and there is a lack of proactive planning to address this.
- Young people continue to go missing from the home.
- On one occasion a young person was missing overnight and the staff were not aware.
- Although some good work has been done on improving the home conditions, there are still areas that require attention.
- The home does not have a computer with internet access designated for supporting the young people's education.
- Although good quality monitoring does take place, the independent person's reports are not always forwarded to HMCI.
- Young people receive some support in acquiring independence skills, but there is not a coordinated incremental approach to developing the young people's skills in readiness to move on to semi independence or independence.

The children's home strengths

The home has strengths in a number of areas. Leaders and managers are suitably qualified and experienced and have a vision for improving the home with clear ideas as to how they are going to achieve their goals. They have good understanding of the young people's needs and the areas which need to improve to ensure that young people's needs are met to a high standard.

Attention has been paid to the young people's cultural needs following advice from the Independent visitor and this has resulted in greater importance being attached to the young people's cultural identity.

Young people who have previously had poor attendance in education have significantly improved attendance following placement at this home.

Young people's anti-social behaviour reduces.

Communication between the home and outside agencies is proactive and effective.

One of the key strengths of the home is their promotion of family contact, often involving staff driving young people long distances to facilitate and sometimes supervise this.

Young people's day-to-day safety is generally good, and they make progress from their starting points in keeping themselves safe.

Young people's behaviour is generally settled and they do not have incidents of challenging behaviour that require police intervention or physical management.

The quality of internal and external monitoring is good.

A great deal of work has gone into developing the garden area and some parts of the external grounds are beginning to look nice and welcoming.

Any new placement is carefully considered. The impact of any placement on existing residents is fully taken into account.

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

Statutory Requirements

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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
6: The quality and purpose of care standard. In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard the registered person must ensure - (c)(i) that the premises used for the purpose of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child. Specifically that ripped sofas are replaced, mould in the bathroom is removed and the home has an exterior house number or name.	28/09/2015
12: The protection of children standard. In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must ensure- (2)(b) that the home's day to day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. Specifically that a system is in place to visibly check that young people are in the home before staff lock up and go to bed themselves.	30/09/2015
9: The enjoyment and achievement standard. In order to meet the enjoyment and achievement standard the Registered person must ensure- (1) that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, physical and social interests and skills.	28/10/2015
10: The health and well-being standard. In order to meet the health and well-being standard the registered person must ensure (2)(iii) that children take part in activities, attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child's health and wellbeing needs.	28/10/2015

(1)(b) that Children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and wellbeing. This relates specifically to advice and support in relation to smoking cessation.	
44: Independent person: visits and reports. The Independent Person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to HMCI. Regulation 44(7)	30/09/2015

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- The Education Standard; Children should have access to a computer and the internet to support their learning and education. The Guide to the Quality Standards, p.29, 5.19

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. A private company owns and operates the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/03/2015	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
16/12/2014	CH - Full	Good
27/02/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	requires improvement
Young people have high attendance at their educational provision, this is supported by staff who work hard to keep routine and structure in place for the young people during the school term. Young people's actual engagement with education falls below their attendance and is inconsistent. For some young people there has been a significant decline in engagement, consequently they are making insufficient progress. Through praise, rewards and target setting young people's engagement could be improved.. The provision of a computer for the young people, with internet access, to support their learning outside school would assist in this area. Young people are healthy and are registered at all appropriate local health care facilities. Young people choose not to engage in a large number of health appointments and this could impact on meeting their longer term health needs. Insufficient action is taken by staff to secure young people's attendance at these appointments. When success is achieved inappropriate rewards such as money to purchase tobacco is offered as a reward. Young people smoke tobacco and are suspected of occasional drug misuse. There are strong strategies in place to address their drug misuse but a tacit acceptance of their smoking tobacco means that no education or external services are provided to the young people to assist them in smoking cessation or reduction. Family contact is promoted at this home and there is a clear understanding of the importance of this for young people. Staff often undertake very long journeys with young people who are placed far from their home authority to ensure that contact takes place. The young people have some specific cultural needs and there is evidence that the home has made extensive efforts in order to identify and implement areas for improving their responses to the young people's cultural requirements. The menus and diet that the young people are offered is a true reflection of their food culture and meets their needs very well. Behaviour management is a strength of this home and young people make very good progress in this area from their starting points. Staff are good at recognising strategies for de-escalating young people's behaviour and this results in physical management of behaviour being unnecessary. Young people have minimal engagement in activities outside of education. They	

spend time in their rooms listening to music or enjoy free time together, but rarely engage in any activities with staff and do not engage in positive activities in the wider community. Although staff acknowledge that this area needs addressing, there is an absence of a robust strategy to effectively improve participation.

The young people in this home are beginning to acquire some independence skills but the staff team lack drive and commitment to ensuring that young people are fully prepared for independence. The young people are not adequately encouraged to engage in shopping and budgeting activities which would assist their readiness for the transition to independent living.

Young people have generally positive relationships with staff, but do not often elect to spend time with them, therefore the relationships that are developed are not close, trusting relationships where young people feel they can seek support for any personal issues they may be experiencing. The staff team do work hard to support the young people and try to develop their relationships.

The young people in the home have a positive relationship with each other.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement
The risks that young people are exposed to are well understood. There are appropriate plans in place to manage these risks and as a result most young people are supported to become increasingly safe. Staff are fully aware of the procedures in place to safeguard young people and they work in line with external agencies to ensure a coordinated approach to risk management. Children report feeling safe in the home and with the staff who care for them. There have been no allegations against staff. The home uses safe recruitment processes and staff are carefully selected and vetted to ensure that they do not pose a risk of harm to the young people. Some young people have regular incidents of going missing. There are clear plans in place to locate and return the young person, and to notify the relevant agencies if the missing episode continues. The missing from home coordinator from the local constabulary reports a positive working relationship with the home. Although the young person's missing episodes have remained at a consistent level they are	

usually for a very short duration. On one occasion missing from home procedures were not properly followed and steps have been put in place to ensure that this does not recur.

Young people are believed to engage in some drug misuse. There are plans in place to regularly address the impact of drug misuse with the young people through keyworker sessions and the use of outside agencies. There are clear boundaries around drug misuse with consequences for presenting under the influence that reduce young people's ability to access substances.

On some occasions young people can cause damage to the home. From their starting points this behaviour decreases. Young people's behaviour is not unnecessarily criminalised when they have caused damage and reparation and repayment work is often undertaken as a consequence.

The young people at this home have involvement from the youth offending team. The home positively promotes their attendance at appointments and their engagement with their youth offending team workers. The home helps the young people to abide by the terms of their licence and reduces their risk of re-offending through a positive approach to addressing their offending behaviour.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The home is managed by an experienced manager who works across two of the company's homes with the support of a deputy manager who is relatively new to post but has worked within the home for approximately five years. The staffing team is stable, although one post is currently vacant. A recruitment process is in process to fill this vacancy which is currently being covered either by staff from the managers' other home within the company or by a regular agency worker. Young people therefore benefit from consistency in respect of staffing. The majority of staff have a suitable childcare qualification or are enrolled on a course to complete one. There is a solid induction process for new staff who complete the induction standards before progressing to the national vocational qualification (NVQ) level 3 qualification. There has previously been a recommendation in respect of funding for the NVQ level three course and this has been resolved to some extent, with funding being available to staff who commit to remaining within the company for three years post qualification. There is a wide variety of training available to staff including training on child	

sexual exploitation, which supports their ongoing learning.

Supervision takes place regularly and staff report good levels of satisfaction with the supervision they receive. In addition, they receive annual appraisals which assist their professional development.

Monitoring and evaluation activity takes place and includes feedback from staff, professionals and the young people. The monitoring is used to good effect and feeds into the home's development plan. External monitoring is robust and helpful to the home's development, although reports are not always sent to HMCI as required.

The home is a physically safe environment and meets the needs of the young people. The manager has a vision to move forward and improve the standard of the home environment both internally and externally to make it more welcoming and homely for young people. Some of this work has already been undertaken, with the gardens having had a good deal of attention and a new kitchen partially fitted. However, there are still some areas where improvement would benefit the young people. For example, ripped sofas need replacing in the living room and mould in the bathroom needs to be removed.

Effective relationships with partner agencies are developed and promoted, including the local police, youth offending team and placing authorities. The collaborative approach to working with young people improves their protection and progress.

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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