

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	02/07/2015
Unique reference number	SC006017
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	Mr Michael Fletcher
Registered manager	Mr Peter Mahon
Inspector	Mr Anthony Kyem

Inspection date	02/07/2015
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
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	Good

SC006017

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Staff have exceptionally good relationships with the young people. They provide them with continuity of care so they have stability and continuity in their lives.
- Staff provide young people with effective support, help and protection. Young people are becoming increasingly safer because staff have helped them to reduce their risk taking behaviour, including risk of exploitation, drug use and being away from home for long periods.
- The care provided for young people is well planned and takes account of their needs and vulnerabilities. Staff know young people well and they work pro-actively with other agencies to meet the needs of young people.
- Young people who live a long way from home have regular contact with their families. Their feelings are managed sensitively and they feel involved in all aspects of their care.
- The performance of the home is monitored effectively by an experienced manager and others, who are independent of the home. However, some monitoring reports are not easily accessible to staff and have not been received by Ofsted.
- Young people enjoy good attendance in education and have aspirations to attend an alternative school. Staff are working closely with the local education authority to identify an appropriate provision.

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
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; and (e) the responsible individual (if one is nominated). (Regulation 44.(1) (7))	28/07/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure that children should be in full-time education whilst they are of compulsory school leaving age, unless their personal education plan or other relevant plans states otherwise. This relates specifically to acting on the young person wishes to access mainstream school or alternative educational provision. (Guide to the quality standards, page 28, paragraph 5.14)
- ensure when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child (Guide to the quality standards, page 45, paragraph 9.30)

Full report

Information about this children's home

- the home is registered to provide care and accommodation for 1 young person with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties
- the home is privately owned and managed

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/07/2015	CH-Full	Good
20/03/2015	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
19/09/2014	CH - Full	Good
26/03/2014	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Young people benefit from a highly supportive, caring and nurturing environment. They make good progress at the home and they benefit from effective, good quality support from staff. Staff provide young people with positive experiences that maximise the progress they make across all aspects of their lives. This includes their welfare, physical, social, emotional and behavioural development. The home provides young people with well planned, highly individualised care that promotes their needs effectively. Young people benefit from exceptionally good relationships with staff that provide them with continuity of care so they have stability and consistency in their lives. Relationships between staff and young people are based on trust and mutual respect. Staff know young people well, and they address their needs effectively. Young people look up to staff they can relate to and learn from. Young people report, 'It's staff that make this home good. They are inspiring and I look at them like they're my mates. What I like about staff is they're down to earth and you can trust them. They talk to me and don't talk down to me. There's a lot of respect in this house. All staff are very respectful.' Young people are registered with appropriate health services and they have access to specialist workers to help them deal with their past experiences, present feelings and emotions. Consequently, they receive good support to promote their positive health. The home maintains effective partnerships with all health professionals to meet the needs of young people. The designated nurse for looked after children reports, 'I am involved in terms of completing the health assessments for the young people in their care. They do contact me if they need any advice and signposting to health services locally.' Young people enjoy regular attendance at school but their engagement is sometimes sporadic. The young person is currently educated on site but has aspirations to attend a mainstream school or alternative provision. The home is working closely with the local education authority to support the young person's transition to an alternative school. Staff have high aspirations for young people and they work pro-actively with their teachers and social workers to promote their educational achievement. Young people benefit from effective support to develop their life skills, resilience and self-confidence. They are allowed to take appropriate risks to promote their growth and natural development. Young people have recently been supported to	

obtain part-time employment and have gained valuable skills and work experience, as a result. Staff provide young people with positive activities both at the home and in the local community. Young people say they enjoy walking a neighbour's dog and have recently visited an athletics club. Staff take young people on trips out and there are plans for young people to go abroad on holiday. As a result, they can learn more about the world around them.

Staff actively listen to the views, wishes and feelings of young people. They engage them in house meetings and one to one sessions to support and involve them. As a result, young people feel involved in key decisions and they are able to contribute to running of the home. Young people know how to make a complaint and their complaints are treated seriously. Young people have access to advocates, if they require them to make representations on their behalf.

Young people enjoy living at the home but they do struggle with living such a long way from their friends and family. Staff facilitate regular contact and this enables young people to keep in touch with the people who most important to them.

Young people report, 'I get on well with all staff. It's chilled and there's not a lot of chaos here. Sometimes, it's not what I want. I wish I could pick it up and move it so I was nearer to home...There's nothing more they could do to make me happy. There's no timescales for me to move...It's as long as it takes. The reason I'm here, is because of my past. I know I've come a long way from where I was. Peter and staff understand that. Staff get where I'm coming from.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Young people become increasingly safer because of the actions staff have taken to protect them. Their safety is always at the centre of staff practice irrespective of the challenges this presents. Staff work with young people to address their vulnerabilities and risks associated with them are well-known and understood by staff. Young people's safety is actively promoted and staff have helped them to reduce their risk taking behaviour, including the risk of offending, drug use and exploitation. The number of times young people go missing or absent for long periods has reduced. Staff actively look for young people if they are missing. If young people's whereabouts are not known, staff follow effective procedures to promote their safe return. Some return home interviews have been conducted by the placing authority while others have been undertaken by staff. The manager has requested that the placing authority meets their statutory responsibilities to ensure more frequent	

return home interviews take place.

Staff at the home are selected and vetted carefully to protect young people from unsuitable people. Staff are trained in child protection so they know how to protect from abuse and all other forms of significant harm. Young people are kept safe and are not at risk of harm. There have been no allegations of abuse since the last inspection.

Staff promote young people's positive behaviour and they understand how their past experiences, present feelings and emotions can often be communicated through negative behaviour. Young people are supported by staff to manage their own feelings and emotions and to take responsibility for their behaviour. As a result, they learn to exercise greater self-control. Behaviour management strategies are used effectively by staff to keep young people safe from harm. There have been no restraints since the last inspection and the use of sanctions are kept to minimum.

The home is consistently maintained to good quality standards for young people. It provides them with a safe, warm, welcoming and homely environment. Staff encourage young people to personalise the home and they delegate them responsibilities, such as, cleaning their bedrooms, helping staff with shopping and washing up after meals. All health and safety matters are managed effectively to promote the safety of young people.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
A suitably qualified and experienced Registered Manager is employed. The manager has been registered with Ofsted since the transfer of their registration in 2007. They hold a recognised qualification in Leadership and Management. A deputy manager is also employed to support the Registered Manager with the routine operations of the home. There are clear lines of delegation and accountability. Leaders and managers routinely monitor the progress young people make and seek to improve the standard and quality of their care. They understand the home's strengths and areas for improvement and take action to improve the experiences and care for young people. The performance of the home is monitored effectively by an independent professional who visits the home, each month. However, monitoring reports are not always accessible to staff and reports completed since March 2015 have not been received by Ofsted. Consequently, a requirement is made in respect of this issue.	

Young people benefit from a stable, experienced, well-trained and competent staff group. Leaders and managers ensure the home is staffed in way that meets the needs of young people who live there. Staff maintain effective partnerships with the placing authority, schools, health workers and young people's families to improve outcomes for young people.

The home meets the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose in delivering a good quality service for young people. Young people benefit from the care and support that they receive. Leaders and managers can clearly demonstrate the positive difference and value the home has made to the lives of the young people.

There were no requirements or recommendations from the previous inspection. The training needs of staff are identified and met. As a result, staff have sufficient skills, knowledge and experience to meet the specific needs of young people in their care. Leaders and managers provide effective support to staff and ensure they receive regular team meetings and professional supervision that is focussed on young people's needs, progress and experiences.

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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