

SC006017

Registered provider: Care Afloat Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned and managed by a private organisation. It provides care and accommodation for one child aged between 12 and 18 years. The registered manager has been in post since August 2017 and was registered on 10 January 2018. She is registered to manage two services and divides her time between the two services equally.

Inspection dates: 7 to 8 June 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 31 August 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/08/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
06/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
30/11/2016	Full	Good
11/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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
11: The positive relationships standard In order to meet the positive relationships standard, the registered person must ensure: (1) that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on (a) mutual respect and trust; (b) an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and (c) positive responses to other children and adults; and (i) 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. (Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c)(i))	31/07/2018
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must ensure that: (2) there is a registered person to 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. (Regulation 13(2))	31/07/2018

Recommendations

- Regulation 29(3) requires that a manager must have the capacity to be in full-time day-to-day charge of each children's home that they manage. If an individual is manager for more than one home, the registered person must ensure that the individual has the skills and experience to manage all of the homes effectively. There needs to be appropriate delegation structures and staff being delegated to need to have sufficient skills, experience and capacity to take on managerial and leadership roles. When a new person (who is not the registered provider) is appointed as manager for a home, the registered provider should support them to become registered with Ofsted without delay. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 51, paragraph 12.3)

- The registered person must ensure that the behaviour management strategy is understood and applied at all times by staff, and must be kept under review and revised where appropriate. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.34)
- 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 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 children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- A record of supervision should be kept for staff, including the manager. The record should provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with regulation 33(4)(b). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home has experienced a period of stability since the last inspection. Care is provided by a consistent team of staff that is appropriately skilled and experienced. This supports young people to develop secure, trusting relationships with staff. Overall, young people are making good progress from their starting points.

All young people are engaged in education or training that is tailored to their individual needs. Staff are ambitious for young people and support their educational progress and attainment. They are encouraged to be aspirational and staff support them to take small steps to achieve their goals.

Staff use incentives to support progress across a number of areas, such as keeping bedrooms tidy, maintaining school attendance and getting involved in tasks in the home to promote independent living skills. Staff are also experienced in keeping young people safe and in helping young people to make safer choices. Incentive planning is completely individualised and provides a mechanism for staff and young people to agree their goals and how to achieve them.

A very positive aspect of the care provided is the increase in young people's self-esteem and confidence, and the capacity of young people to regulate their emotions. This increased confidence has supported young people in securing part-time work and being able to maintain positive relationships.

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

improvement to be good

A comprehensive range of risk assessments contributes towards protecting the young people. There have been a number of episodes of young people going missing from home. Although the staff follow the children's individualised missing person risk assessments to locate and safeguard the children, the registered manager does not evaluate these episodes. This limits the opportunity of the manager to monitor staff practice and learning linked to when children are missing from home.

Individual risk assessments for young people at risk of substance misuse or criminal exploitation lack sufficient detail about the specific actions that staff should take to reduce the risk of harm. This means that there is no clear guidance for staff to follow, and young people do not therefore receive a consistent approach from staff who are trying to reduce the risks and keep young people safe.

Young people are not involved in the discussions around the boundaries and rules of the home. So, when the registered manager decided not to allow a young person to visit their friends one evening the young person was very angry in his response. The manager had not taken the time to talk to the staff about how to manage the young person's recent missing from home episodes and develop a strategy about how this behaviour was going to be managed. As a result, the young person's anger led to serious damage being caused to the home.

Staff have access to clinical support through consultation with an in-house clinician. This enables staff to improve their understanding of the emotions being expressed through young people's behaviour and therefore employ appropriate strategies to support young people.

Staff use a positive behaviour management strategy, using incentives to reward positive behaviour, and, as a result, staff have not needed to use physical intervention to manage negative behaviour for several months. Staff are skilled in using a range of de-escalation techniques to manage challenging behaviour and this is working well. Staff are usually able to recognise the triggers that may lead to challenging behaviour and use this knowledge to defuse situations. The incentive system is sometimes used to work with young people in agreeing strategies to keep themselves safe.

A range of health and safety checks are regularly completed and updated to ensure the safety of young people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager is appropriately skilled and experienced. On the whole, staffing has been stable since the full inspection, providing young people with consistent and dependable care. The registered manager is registered to manage two services but the deputy manager for the home is currently on maternity leave. This has resulted in a lack of appropriate delegation structure, and areas of improvement have therefore been identified in the management of the home.

Staff meetings and supervision sessions for staff are irregular. This means that communication about the progress of young people and the focus on the approach of staff in managing children's behaviour are being missed.

The statement of purpose for the home has been updated. However, some of the work carried out with the young people is not conducive to the ethos and values described in this statement of purpose. Furthermore, some staff have demonstrated their lack of understanding around this ethos when undertaking key-work with children.

Staffing arrangements at the home allow staff to spend time with young people and to build positive relationships with them. It is these relationships that underpin the success that the staff have with the young people. The staff have also built effective partnerships with the social workers and other agencies to help promote positive outcomes for young people.

The independent visitor for the home produces detailed monthly reports on all aspects of the service. These are thorough and clear, and provide a good monitoring tool for the manager. The manager reports that she values the input of the independent visitor and uses their findings to inform improvements in practice and outcomes for the young people.

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: SC006017

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care Afloat Ltd

Registered provider address: 158-160 Birkrig, Digmoor Parade, Skelmersdale WN8 9HP

Responsible individual: Michael Fletcher

Registered manager: Carol McKenna

Inspector

Elaine Clare, social care inspector

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