

SC006017

Registered provider: Care Afloat Ltd

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to take one young person who has emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is one of nine homes owned and operated by a small private organisation.

There is a manager in post who was registered with Ofsted in January 2018.

Inspection date: 7 March 2019

Judgement at last inspection: good

Date of last inspection: 7 June 2018

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has declined in effectiveness.

The care and experiences of young people are poor. At the last inspection, two requirements and four recommendations were made to improve the home. This inspection identified that only one of the recommendations has been met. The registered manager has failed to meet the requirements from the last inspection. The remaining three recommendations and the two requirements have been repeated.

Throughout the last year, there have been periods of unsettlement in the home. There have been incidents in which young people have assaulted staff, including setting fire to the registered manager's hair, assaulting a maintenance man with a screwdriver and causing significant damage to the home. This includes kicking a door from its hinges and

throwing the door down the stairs. Police intervention has been required to support the staff in managing the behaviours of young people. The day-to-day experiences of young people living in the home have been poor. Ineffective care planning and poor behaviour management have led to poor outcomes for young people.

This unsettlement has led to a placement being terminated and a young person being moved in an unplanned way to semi-independent living.

The turbulent placement of a young person has led to concerns and a formal complaint from the neighbour. His objection around excessive noise has led to the local council undergoing a three-month surveillance programme on the levels of noise at the home. A warning letter informing the registered manager about the noise has been issued stating that if the noise levels continue to be unacceptable, then the home would be served with an abandonment notice. Although the registered manager stated that she has visited the neighbour, she could not provide any paperwork about the visit or the detail of any investigation that she had undertaken about the neighbour's concerns.

Staff promote young people's health by ensuring that young people are registered with relevant health professionals when they are admitted to the home. Staff do not, however, always have the full information about the young people they are looking after, and there was limited evidence to demonstrate the action taken by the manager to obtain all information about young people from the placing authority. For example, staff had not obtained the legal documentation around a Deprivation of Liberty order. This meant that staff lacked the information which could have informed their work with the young person.

Staff are all trained in physical intervention, which may be necessary to manage the challenging behaviours of young people. Staff try to de-escalate situations, but this is not always effective. The registered manager has not identified discrepancies or concerns around staff practice, as she has failed to complete an overall evaluation of the incidents. Furthermore, this has not been addressed with staff in supervision, as supervision rarely occurs. Staff do not receive debriefs following physical interventions within the required timeframe. This does not ensure that the staff's practice is safe or that any areas of concern are addressed. This fails to monitor the well-being of staff.

Individual risk assessments for young people who are at risk of being criminally exploited or using illegal substances lack sufficient detail about the specific actions that staff should take to reduce risks. This means that there is no clear guidance for staff to follow, and young people do not therefore receive a consistent approach from staff, to reduce risks and keep them safe. Poor staff supervision of young people and poor implementation of risk management plans have resulted in occasions when young people have taken items from the home to sell to buy cannabis. This includes a television, a games console and a guitar. Sometimes, staff have failed to pass this information on to the relevant professionals in line with child protection procedures. Staff fail to learn from incidents, as they do not ask young people important questions, such as how they got the cannabis. Consequently, such incidents continue to occur and place the young person in a continuing position of risk.

The children's home has been described as 'bleak' by the independent visitor. For example, the bathroom is tired and uninviting, and there is no warmth to the environment. The internal doors are plain, unfinished wood and there is a roll of carpet in the hallway which has been in situ since December. It does not provide young people with a nurturing environment.

The lack of management oversight in this home is extremely poor. The registered manager has failed to promote the welfare and safety of young people. Serious events within the home have failed to be notified to Ofsted in line with regulation. This includes the serious complaint from the neighbour. Independent reports have not been sent to Ofsted in line with the regulation, with the registered manager citing a breakdown in communication as the reason.

Supervision is ineffective. It is of poor quality, infrequent and it does not focus on young people's needs or staff practice. The registered manager does not enable staff to learn after significant incidents. She has not challenged staff practice when it has been unsafe or when there have been concerns. As a result, staff practice does not change.

The registered manager is currently registered for two children's homes. Although there is also a deputy employed to cover the two homes, this does not allow for sufficient full-time oversight of the children's homes. As a result, Ofsted has observed significant shortfalls in the safe welfare of young people who are placed at the home and the health and well-being of the staff employed to care for them.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/06/2018	Full	Good
31/08/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
06/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
30/11/2016	Full	Good

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
The positive relationships standard In order to meet the positive relationships standard, the registered person must ensure: that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults;. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c)(i))	30/04/2019
The protection of children standard 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 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; and 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 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 (2)(a)(b)(d))	30/04/2019
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (3))	30/04/2019
The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to HMCI. (Regulation 44 (7)(a))	30/04/2019

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 need 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)
- 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)

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.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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

Inspectors

Elaine Clare, social care inspector
Sophie Thomson, social care inspector

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