

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	11/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC006017
Type of inspection	Interim
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	Anthony Kyem

Inspection date	11/02/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
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 full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has sustained effectiveness. Since the last inspection two young people have left the home. There are now no young people living there. The young person that lived at the home at the time of the last inspection refused to return following contact with their family. The placement was eventually ended by the placing authority. Prior to leaving, the young person had made good progress at the home. The home's most recent admission occurred in November 2015. However, the young person was reluctant to cooperate with their plans and didn't invest in the placement. They damaged property, refused to engage and had difficulties attending their education. The young person's placement was ended recently and they have now moved onto alternative care provision. This was done in a planned and positive way. Despite the challenges and difficulties the young person presented during their short time at the home, the staff team did manage their behaviours safely and the young person was protected from harm. The use of sanctions are kept to an absolute minimum and restraint, if used at all, is only ever used as a last resort to protect young people from harm, accident or injury. There have been no sanctions, complaints, or restraints, since the last inspection. The home promotes young people's education. The young person's educational attendance was sporadic, however, staff had begun to make some slow, but positive inroads. For example, there were no issues with drug use, or offending and the young person was beginning to form positive relationships with staff. However, the young person was placed a long way from home and this proved to be too difficult and frustrating for them. The last independent visitor report states 'The young person appears to be struggling to settle in. One can understand this as he lives a long way from home. His family is important to him, so from his perspective what is the point of making any investment in this placement under these circumstances...Staff appear to be doing everything they can to engage with him and help him settle.' The staff report, 'We just weren't getting the best out of him.' The accommodation provided for young people is physically safe, appropriately	

secure, warm, comfortable and homely. The home is in the process of being completely redecorated. The damage caused by the previous young person has been repaired quickly to ensure a high quality environment is maintained for young people. The home is tastefully furnished and decorated. However, the kitchen units are looking old and replacement units would further improve the physical features of the home.

Significant incidents are reported to the appropriate authorities charged with a duty to protect young people. This ensures they are protected and supported and benefit from the best possible help and all-round support. Staff take appropriate steps if young people are absent or go missing from care. They actively look for them and follow and implement the home's procedures to promote their safe return. There has only been one missing from care episode in relation to the previous resident young person. There is no evidence to show that an independent return home interview was requested or took place on behalf of the placing authority. As a result, the previous recommendation is repeated.

The requirement from the last inspection has been addressed and met. Independent scrutiny of the home's performance is effective and reports are prepared each month on the conduct of the home. Combined with the Registered Manager's own internal monitoring activities, there are effective systems to secure the home's improvement. The Registered manager routinely monitors the quality of young people's care to improve their outcomes.

Information about this children's home

- The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for 1 young person who may have emotional and/ or behavioural difficulties and learning disabilities.
- 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

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

Recommendations

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

- 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)
- provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming and supportive. Homes must also meet children's basic day to day needs and physical necessities. Staff should seek to meet the child's basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met – doing so is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child and value them as an individual. This relates specifically to the refurbishment of the kitchen. (The Guide to the quality standards, page 15, paragraph 3.7)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

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

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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