

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	30/11/2016
Unique reference number	SC006017
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Care Afloat Ltd.
Registered provider address	158 Birkrig, SKELMERSDALE, Lancashire, WN8 9HP

Responsible individual	Michael Fletcher
Registered manager	Post Vacant
Inspector	Karen Willson

Inspection date	30/11/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
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	Requires improvement

SC006017

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The young person in placement currently is making good progress. In particular, his attendance and engagement in education has improved.
- The home had advocated strongly to ensure that funding was made available for the 25 hours of education to which the young person is entitled.
- The home also advocated to ensure that funding was agreed for the young person to attend therapy, which was an assessed need. He is now engaging with therapy on a weekly basis.
- The young person's missing episodes have decreased. There was a considerable period when he did not go missing. When he has gone missing more recently, he has not engaged in the negative behaviours within the community that were previously seen. The home advocated and was supported by other professionals, including the police, for the young person to have some free time in order to see his friends.
- The staff team has a good understanding of the young person's needs and risks and the staff work together to provide consistency of care. They balance the promoting of his independence with nurture to ensure that he feels cared for.
- The deputy manager, who has taken over following the departure of the registered manager, has ensured continuity within the home. However, the post-holder still requires registration with Ofsted.
- Staff are supported and receive appropriate training to understand the young person's specific needs in order to provide appropriate care and support.
- The home works well with other agencies and in line with their statement of purpose to ensure that the young person receives a high quality of care. They communicate well and challenge appropriately to ensure his needs are met.

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 that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides 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. (Guide to the Quality Standards page 15, paragraph 3.7).
- ensure that electronic records should be held at the individual home in accordance with data protection principles. This relates specifically to ensuring that records sent by other professionals to the home are sent by secure methods. (Guide to the Quality Standards page 61, paragraph 14.2).

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for one young person with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and learning difficulties. The home is privately owned and managed.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
02/07/2015	Full	Good
20/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
19/09/2014	Full	Good
26/03/2014	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The young person currently in placement is making good progress. His attendance and engagement in education has increased and he enjoys attending two alternative provisions, as well as the company's own education site. Twenty-five hours of educational provision has been in place since the commencement of the young person's placement, and the home continued to advocate to ensure funding from the placing authority at this level after being advised initially that only 15 hours would be funded. A computer is provided to enable the young person to complete any homework. The home was persistent in escalating and advocating for funding to be approved for therapy as identified via specialist assessments. The young person is now engaging in therapy on a weekly basis from appropriately qualified and experienced professionals. Staff ensure that his day-to-day health needs are met and encourage his participation in planning a healthy menu and enjoying physical exercise. The young person enjoys some activities with staff and is now beginning to enjoy free time to spend with friends. The home also supports contact with his family on a regular basis. They note that the young person is making progress by identifying his own needs during contact, for example that he should not be given excess sugar as this can affect his behaviour. Staff have built relationships with the young person and encourage him to develop age-appropriate independence skills while also providing nurture to ensure he feels valued and cared for. His diversity needs are recognised and supported positively. The young person is central to the staff's practice, they know him well and they maintain consistent and appropriate boundaries to support him to understand his behaviours. Staff understand that negative behaviours may reflect previous experiences and difficult emotions, which is supported by appropriate training to meet his particular needs. They provide opportunities to discuss any concerns he may have. Irrespective of any challenges they may face, they recognise and reward the young person's positive behaviour. Incentives are used to promote positive behaviour and are made in discussion with the young person. The young person was placed in an emergency which was due to the breakdown of a previous placement, and therefore no pre-admission visits took place. However, the home ensured that he knows how to complain and can access an independent advocate if required. He is involved in the development of the home and is listened to in respect of the décor. The staff respect his identity needs and recognise that he lives away from the area where he grew up, and where appropriate have	

advocated for some additional contact with his family for special occasions.

Prior to this young person's admission, another young person had been placed at the home at some distance from her home locality for a short period. This placement was not successful and was terminated by the placing authority as the young person was placed in secure accommodation.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Robust risk assessments are in place to keep the young person safe. These are regularly reviewed and linked to behaviour management strategies. Staff have a good understanding of plans to ensure that risks are minimised and that all agencies are working together to protect him. The young person states he feels safe within the home and felt able to make a complaint, which was taken forward by staff who listened and responded appropriately. They helped him to understand why it could not be resolved to his complete satisfaction. The home has close working relationships with the police and missing from home coordinator to reduce missing from home incidents. Due to concerns regarding the young person's behaviour in the community while missing, a plan was put in place to restrict unsupervised time away from the home. Although there were further episodes of unauthorised absence, no further concerns were raised by police and he is now on a phased plan of increasing periods of free time. This has been clearly explained and staff are consistent in ensuring that the young person understands each stage. The home has requested independent return interviews following each occasion when the young person has been absent on an unauthorised basis. However, the placing authority has not completed these consistently or provided the requested feedback for the home to ensure effective planning to keep the young person safe. Following further challenge, the home has been assured this will be rectified and recent reports have been sent. A recommendation is repeated from the last inspection in this respect. Staff are aware of the potential risks for the young person's access to the internet. Parental controls are in place and he is supervised when using the computer. There was appropriate response to concerns of the young person being bullied on social media and it was made clear to him why he should not provide personal information. Staff acted appropriately to help him understand how to keep himself safer.	

The home identified support from other agencies, such as the fire service, and ensured this was in place to help the young person in his understanding of the consequences of his actions. This work was supported by key work sessions and continues with the youth offending service. Additional checks are made within the home to ensure all fire safety measures are effective. If items of concern are located in the young person's bedroom, these are removed and appropriately recorded. There is clear identification of previous and current risks that are monitored and reviewed. Any concerns are reported appropriately to other professionals.

Staff promote and reward the young person's positive behaviour through incentive systems and in response to day-to-day achievements. He is supported to take responsibility for his behaviour. There is an effective behaviour management plan in place to ensure that staff provide a consistent response to keep the young person safe from harm. There have been no restraints since the last inspection and consequences are used appropriately.

The home is a safe and secure place for the young person to live in. There are some areas of the home which require updating to ensure that it feels homely, specifically the kitchen and a recommendation is therefore repeated from the previous inspection.

A previous young person placed was considered to be at high risk of child sexual exploitation and trafficking. The home raised immediate concerns with the placing authority, and tried to prevent her from going missing. They appropriately notified the placing authority of the limitations of the home and that it could not be made a secure setting.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
The registered manager left the home with immediate effect in October 2016, following a period of illness. Since that time the home has been overseen by the deputy manager while a new manager is being recruited. This has provided continuity and minimised any impact on the young person or the quality of his care. However, the post-holder is not registered with Ofsted, therefore leadership and management still require improvement. The staff team is stable and competent and receives regular supervision. Staff are suitably experienced and qualified or are working towards a level 3 qualification. All staff receive regular supervision, which supports their welfare and development as	

well as understanding of the young person's needs. Team meetings and handovers ensure good communication and support in delivering good quality and consistent care of the young person. Prior to the arrival of the young person, managers ensured that additional training was identified and arranged in respect of some of his specific needs.

There are appropriate procedures in place to monitor regularly the quality of care that the home provides. Improvements have been made to paperwork to make plans more accessible and individualised in responding to a young person's needs, and further areas of improvement have been identified. The home is also monitored externally by an independent visitor on a monthly basis and regular discussions take place in regard to his recommendations. There is a development plan for the home which is kept under review.

The home ensures that the young person's privacy is maintained, and stores all information in line with data protection. It also ensures that any information sent electronically is password protected. However, other professionals have not ensured secure electronic transfer of information and a recommendation is therefore made about this.

The home meets the aims and objectives of its statement of purpose to provide a good quality of care to young people placed at the home. The young person remains central to their practice and they will advocate appropriately to ensure that his progress is recognised, for example in progressing his staged plan towards increased free time in recognition that he was engaging in therapy sessions.

The home maintains positive working relationships with other professionals, including police, youth offending service, health workers and therapists. The deputy manager or members of staff attend all relevant meetings to ensure that needs identified in his care plan are being met and proactively contribute to planning. They have challenged effectively the placing authority regarding delays in the young person accessing education and therapeutic input. They have also persisted in challenging the authority regarding missing from home independent return interviews. Professionals state that working relationships are good, and that communication is efficient and regular, and that the staff are committed and proactive to ensure that the young person's needs are met.

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 children looked after 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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