

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC008488
Inspector	Paul Scott
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Halliwell Homes Limited
Registered person address	28 Sandown Road Haslingden ROSSENDALE Lancashire BB4 6PL
Responsible individual	Karen Mitchell-Mellor
Registered manager	POST VACANT
Date of last inspection	31/10/2013

Inspection date	11/12/2014
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Previous inspection	inadequate progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	adequate
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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Young people make good progress in this very supportive and nurturing environment. All young people talk positively about the home, its staff and the level of care they receive. For example, one young person said, 'I give the home 100 out of 100. I love it here.'

Young people are settled in their placements. They share strong attachments with staff who demonstrate a genuine commitment to helping them find a sense of stability and belonging. The effectiveness of this approach is evident in the progress young people make in many aspects of their lives, particularly in terms of their improved confidence, resilience and educational achievement.

Young people confirm that they feel safe and well cared for. They benefit from clear, age-appropriate boundaries that are designed to keep them stay safe from unnecessary harm. Staff know young people well and effectively manage their complex and challenging behaviours, risks and vulnerabilities, on a daily basis. Young people's needs are well documented in their records and staff work closely with parents and professionals to ensure these needs are met.

Management arrangements are adequate. There have been a number of changes in

management since the last inspection. The current manager is an experienced childcare professional who is committed to the young people in her care. There is a clear focus on ensuring young people's needs are met on a day to day basis. However, she has not yet fully developed a detailed understanding of her management roles and responsibilities. This lack of management knowledge has led to a number of shortfalls, some of which have impacted significantly on the judgements for this inspection. These relate to the management, investigation and recording of allegations, notification of significant events and the recording and monitoring of restraint. Shortfalls are also noted in relation to fire drills, complaints records, secure storage of young people's belongings, escalating concerns with the placing authority and the managers safeguarding knowledge.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a private children's home registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight young people who may be experiencing emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/10/2013	Interim	inadequate progress
30/04/2013	Full	good
13/11/2012	Interim	good progress
25/07/2012	Full	good

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
16 (2001)	ensure the procedure under paragraph 16(1)(b) is consistently followed (Regulation 16(2)(b)(d))	11/12/2014
30 (2001)	if in relation to a children's home, any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table (Regulation 30(1))	11/12/2014
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose and fully meets regulations. (Regulation 17B(3)(4))	08/01/2015

Recommendations

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

- revise the system for recording complaints to ensure staff understand how these are to be documented, specifically that complaints are documented at the time of the complaint in the log designed for that purpose (NMS 22.1)
- ensure children views are listened to and are acted upon, specifically that children are provided with a secure place to store their personal possession that they can access without asking staff (NMS 1.1)
- ensure there is a formal process in place to escalate concerns when information requested from placing authorities is not provided or statutory reviews are overdue (NMS 25.5)
- vary the times of planned fire drills and evacuations (NMS 10.8)
- ensure the manager of the home has a good knowledge of law and practice, specifically that she understands and implements her responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children (NMS 14.1)
- improve the procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the home, in particular ensure all behaviour management records are complete before signing off. (NMS 21.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make good attachments with staff and peers and develop positive views of themselves. Staff help young people develop a sense of trust and stability through consistent caring relationships. They enable young people to explore and better understand their past experiences. This improves young people's resilience, which in turn makes them more confident in planning for their future and achieving their individual goals. One independent reviewing officer said, 'The progress (name) has made is attributed to the consistent care and stability provided by staff.'

Young people are encouraged to, and do enjoy healthy lifestyles. They have healthy diets and are making positive choices about the food they eat. Staff encourage young people to engage in physical activities which keeps them fit and healthy. Young people have access to a range of health specialists, who along with staff, give good advice to ensure young people have the knowledge and skills to make informed choices about their lifestyles. As a result, young people enjoy healthy lifestyles and refrain from risk taking behaviour such as smoking.

Young people demonstrate a positive commitment towards education. Attendance is extremely high and young people are reported to be making good progress in their academic studies. Young people benefit from having immediate access to the organisations school at the start of their placement. The importance of education is fully promoted as part of the ethos of this home. Staff work closely with the headteacher who has a clear focus on preparing young people to return to mainstream school. This approach has been very successful with the majority of young people who are now in an external education placement.

Young people are encouraged to develop independence skills. These include, helping staff cook the evening meal, tidying their bedrooms and developing good self-care skills, including those associated with young people's ethnicity. For example, a number of young people have been helped to develop the specialist skills required to care for their hair and skin. This helps young people develop the practical skills to prepare them for everyday life.

Staff actively promote contact between young people and their family and friends, in accordance with their individual care plans. They ensure that contact is risk assessed, appropriately supervised and safe. The majority of the young people maintain contact with their families and friends and are positive about this. For those young people who do not have family contact an independent visitor is appointed. They take young people on various activities which helps give young people a sense of belonging as well as an independent person to share their views and experiences with.

Quality of care

good

Young people's needs are comprehensively assessed and taken into account at the point of admission. This ensures young people's needs can be realistically met without impacting negatively on those young people already living at the home. Information is gathered from relevant parties and used to construct detailed and informative care plans, that staff use to inform their practice. These plans are regularly reviewed and updated and outstanding information is chased with relevant parties through email and telephone calls to social workers. However, this informal approach to addressing shortfalls is not always effective in ensuring external professionals meet their statutory obligations. For example, providing relevant care planning information or meeting timescales for statutory reviews.

Care planning and care practice is highly individualised. Each young person is allocated a keyworker who takes responsibility for the oversight of their care. Staff work closely with relevant stakeholders, including the organisation's therapeutic team. This promotes a collaborative approach to meeting young people's holistic needs. Professionals speak positively about the home and how young people are very well supported to overcome the complex challenges they face in their lives. The primary aim of the placement is to enable young people to find stability and return to family living, usually in the form of foster care. The home has been successful in achieving this for a number of young people who have made a successful transition to the family environment. The matching of young people to prospective foster families is extremely rigorous and results in the majority of placements succeeding. When foster placements breakdown the home will do their best to re-accommodate the young person in order to minimise the impact of placement breakdown. One young person who returned in these circumstances said, 'It is great to be back home. I have missed being here with staff and my friends. I really like it here.'

Young people and staff share exceedingly strong and open relationships. Staff use these relationships to good effect to enable young people to express their views about the running of the home and their care. This includes choosing the meals they eat, the activities that they do and offering opinions on newly appointed staff. However, the same diligence has not been exercised in addressing young people's requests to have a secure place in which to keep their personal possessions. Provision is available in the staff room but young people are reluctant to use this as it requires them asking to access their often very personal and treasured items. This lack of provision has resulted in a number of thefts over recent weeks and continues to be a point of conflict between young people.

Young people confirm that they know how to complain or raise concerns. A number of low level complaints have been made and positively addressed since the last inspection. A record of these issues is maintained but in some cases they are poorly organised and lack sufficient detail. This means it is difficult to evidence what action has been taken and the outcome of the investigation. However, when explored with young people they confirmed that their concerns had been listened to and taken

seriously.

Young people benefit from a planned and collaborative approach to meeting their health needs. Their health needs are fully recorded in their health plans and routinely monitored by their keyworker. Staff effectively utilise the skills and expertise of the in-house therapeutic team who are regularly consulted about young people's emotional health and behaviour. Strong links are maintained with the looked after children nurse and all young people are registered with routine healthcare services. This means young people's known and emerging health needs are consistently met.

Young people are very well supported to attend a range of education settings. There is a clear expectation in the home that young people attend school and every effort is made to ensure this is possible. This includes having young people up and ready in the morning and transporting them to school where necessary. When young people are struggling in school staff will work closely with educational professionals to identify suitable strategies that assist young people in addressing their issues. Staff show an interest in young people's experiences and encourage them to talk about their school day, offering praise and reward when appropriate. For example, during tea one young person spoke proudly about how much her reading had improved and staff were keen to reiterate her successes with the inspectors.

All the young people have the opportunity to engage in a range of interesting and meaningful activities such as swimming, skating, gymnastics, rock climbing and music. Staff encourage young people to pursue their individual interests and hobbies and attend activities and clubs of their choice. Young people speak positively about their interests which include going to rainbows, doing drama, singing and playing the steel drums. This provides young people with the opportunity to engage in the wider community and encourages them to develop social skills and positive relationships with their peers. One young person spoke about how she had recently auditioned for Britain's Got Talent.

Young people live in a large comfortable house that is well maintained and suitably equipped to meet their needs. Many areas of the home have been redecorated and young people have been involved in choosing colours for communal areas and their bedrooms. Young people's bedrooms are highly personalised through good use of objects and photographs of their choice.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

The organisation's safeguarding policy has been recently reviewed and updated to ensure it is compliant with current safeguarding expectations and practice. This policy makes clear the manager's responsibilities in the management and referral of allegations about staff, of which there have been two since the last inspection. Both concerns were raised by young people through the regulation 33 visitor and relate to alleged use of inappropriate behaviour management techniques, specifically physical

restraint and staff holding bedroom doors closed when young people were inside. Management responses to these concerns have not been sufficiently robust. For example, the local authority designated person was only informed of issues relating to restraint and not those pertaining to restriction of liberty. Some level of investigation was carried out relating to restraint practice but no action has been taken to confirm whether staff have or have not inappropriately restricted the liberty of young people. This inaction means that young people's welfare may have been, and may continue to be compromised, although no concerns were raised by young people during the inspection. Also, safeguarding records are of an extremely poor quality and provide very little evidence to support those actions that have been taken. In addition to these shortfalls, the manager failed to notify Ofsted of either incident which makes it difficult for them to fulfil their regulatory duty in relation to safeguarding young people.

Detailed risk assessments that are regularly reviewed and updated are used to inform staff practice. These records clearly identify young people's risks and vulnerabilities and procedures for effectively promoting their safe care. High staffing levels and close supervision mean that young people are well supported in keeping themselves safe, taking into account their age and level of understanding. This is particularly effective in managing a very diverse and complex group of young people. For example, bullying and intimidation is challenge and followed up by keywork sessions that are designed to help young people to develop a better understanding of how their behaviour can affect others.

Young people's whereabouts are known at all times and there have been no incidents of them going missing from home since the last inspection. Individual protocols are on young people's files to ensure that a robust and individualised response is taken, should they go missing. These are in line with police missing from home protocols and include utilising the links the home has with external agencies.

Staff encourage sociably acceptable behaviour through good use of praise, encouragement and individualised incentives and rewards. When negative behaviour does occur, staff talk to young people to help them develop an understanding of right and wrong. Sanctions are used infrequently but when they are, they are proportionate and fair. All staff are trained in the use of restraint and a number of staff have completed additional behaviour management training which focuses on de-escalation and diffusion. A notable strength is staffs patience when dealing with young people's challenging and often volatile behaviour. They use their strong relationships to good effect in helping young people regain control of their emotions and behaviour. As a result, the use of restraint is infrequent with only 16 recorded incidents since the last inspection in October 2013. Recording practices relating to restraint have been improved with the reformatting of the log designed for this purpose. However, the quality of recording is inconsistent with a number of records not including key information. For example, one record clearly describes the behaviour leading up to restraint but does not provide any detail of the actual restraint, an issue that wasn't picked up by the manager who had reviewed and

signed the document. This information is available on a more detailed report that is used for the purposes of sharing with the homes clinical team and other relevant professionals. However, this document does not carry any integrity in meeting legislative requirements as the document can be altered at any time and would not stand up to scrutiny or challenge.

There are good procedures for the recruitment and selection of staff. Suitable checks are completed on all potential staff prior to them being in contact with young people. Visitors to the home are required to sign into the visitor's book and are appropriately supervised throughout their visit. This ensures young people are not exposed to people who may pose a risk to them.

Young people live in a safe and secure environment. There are a range of risk assessments pertaining to the environment as well as a location risk assessment which has recently been completed. Young people know how to safely evacuate the home in the event of a fire because they are regularly involved in fire drills. However, there is a lack of variation in the timings of these drills which means young people do not experience what it is like to evacuate the home in the evening or at weekends for example.

Leadership and management

adequate

This home has a number of changes in management since the last inspection. The current manager has been in post since September 2014 and is currently in the process of applying for registration with Ofsted.

The manager is a very child-focused individual who demonstrates a strong commitment to the care of young people. She has a good understanding of her strengths and recognises that she needs to develop a better understanding of her management roles and responsibilities, legislative frameworks and safeguarding role in terms of referral and investigation.

The recommendation from the previous inspection has been addressed. There have been several improvements to the environment including refurbishment of bathrooms and decoration and personalisation of young people's bedrooms. However, the requirement relating to behaviour management records has not been fully addressed and is repeated at this inspection.

The children's guide and the homes Statement of Purpose have been recently updated. These documents provide good information for young people, parents and professionals about the services and support available in the home.

Young people benefit from being cared for by a core staff team who show a strong sense of commitment to meeting their needs. Stability and consistency of the team is improving as new staff start and nearly all permanent posts being filled. This has led to a reduction in the use of agency staff which has and will continue to enhance the

stability and consistency within the team. New staff are well supported throughout their induction and all staff receive regular supervision. Established staff are appropriately qualified and there are good arrangements in place to ensure those staff who do not have a childcare qualification can acquire this within the appropriate timescales. There are good opportunities for staff to develop their skills and knowledge through training in key areas such as safeguarding, first aid and behaviour management for example. In addition, staff are well trained and clinically supervised and supported in the use of the organisation's therapeutic model, which underpins all aspects of care practice. This ensures staff have the right knowledge about young people's needs, progress and development.

The home's performance is reviewed each month by an independent visitor as part of regulation 33 monitoring. Young people are at the centre of this process and there is good representation of their views illustrated in the regulation 33 report. The organisation is currently reviewing the arrangements for the three-monthly review of quality of care including a revised format and clarifying expectations with managers.

Young people's case files stored securely and organised in a manner that makes them usable by staff and accessible to young people. Keyworkers routinely check and update records to ensure they are accurate and provide an up-to-date comprehensive picture of young people's needs, behaviour and progress. However, the same level of monitoring is not applied to other records, in particular restraint records and complaints records.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.