

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC014848
Inspector	Keith Riley
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Cornerways Children's Services Limited
Registered person address	Alpha A, Smallmead House Smallmead Horley Surrey RH6 9LW
Responsible individual	Sara Ann Milner
Registered manager	POST VACANT / Andrew Wayne Fisher
Date of last inspection	29/01/2014

Inspection date	06/11/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people live in a warm family environment tailored to meet their individual needs. They form positive attachments with the staff in a way that promotes confidence and reassures young people that their needs are the main focus of attention at all times.

This is an effective service that positively impacts on the young people's lives. The emotional and psychological well-being of children is central to practice. Young people living in this home receive a good standard of care and highly personalised support from a committed and caring staff team. Young people enjoy good relationships with staff, often describing them as being like family. Young people make good progress in managing their own behaviour as they are supported to come to terms with their sometimes difficult emotions. This includes careful analysis of what is being communicated through behaviour; full consideration is given to the psychological impact of the trauma that children have experienced in their lives. The intensive support that is provided, under the guidance of the home's clinical psychologist, is a significant strength.

This is a home where young people feel safe and secure. Robust safeguarding practice and procedures are well understood and implemented by staff. When young people make poor choices that put them at risk, staff work with other

agencies to keep them as safe as possible and prevent recurrence. However, some risk management strategies are not written down in sufficient detail and, on occasion, the outcome of activity taken in response to safeguarding issues is not sufficiently well documented.

Communication is another key strength of the home. Detailed placement plans provide clear direction for the staff on how best to meet the individual needs of each young person in their care. Effective management ensures that the home is robustly monitored and that practice is continually reviewed in order to improve outcomes the young people.

Education is viewed as a high priority. Young people are fully supported to access the organisation's school. Young people make good academic progress in relation to their starting points.

Recommendations are made to further personalise young people's bedrooms, provide more individually structured activities and ensure that any restrictions on movement do not impact on everyone living in the home.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care for up to six young females who experience emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is part of a private company which has an independent fostering agency, a total of three residential homes and an independent school.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/01/2014	Interim	good progress
24/07/2013	Full	good
06/02/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
26/07/2012	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
11 (2001)	promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding of children accommodated in the children's home; in particular ensure all risk management strategies are written down and fully implemented in practice (Regulation 11 (1)(a))	09/01/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure that children pursue individual interests and hobbies; in particular, develop further opportunities for children to pursue individual interests and hobbies, including leisure activities and trips (NMS 7.2)
- ensure that the home provides a comfortable and homely environment that is well maintained and decorated; in particular, further personalise children's bedrooms (NMS 10.3)
- ensure restrictions for one child do not impose similar restrictions on other children; this relates specifically to the kitchen being locked periodically (NMS 10.4)
- ensure records are clear and up to date; in particular, ensure that the outcome of any activity in response to safeguarding issues is clearly recorded. (NMS 22)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Staff provide a homely and caring environment in which young people are supported to work on their self-esteem, behaviour and independent living skills, and focus on the future. Young people feel comfortable with staff and interact well with them in a relaxed manner. A staff member said, 'The staff and children are like one big family and there is a true feeling of love and care around the place which is often commented on by visitors'. One young person described staff as being like their family. A professional said, 'The staff genuinely care about the children and have developed very good relationships with them'.

Good outcomes include, for example, young people no longer being engaged in self-harming. They begin to take a pride in themselves, as evidenced for example by them taking more care in their appearance. Their emotional resilience and self-esteem greatly improve as a result of the care and attention given to them by the staff in the home. Young people reciprocate the respect and dignity shown to them by the staff.

Education is seen as a priority in the home and young people have excellent support at school. Their achievement is excellent given their respective starting points at the point at which they first moved to the home. Education and support staff work very closely together. This creates an ethos and culture in the home that helps to transform the attitude and approach of young people towards their education. Young people, who had disengaged from education are now making academic progress.

Young people benefit from good levels of contact with their families and people who are important to them. Contact is fully facilitated by care staff. Young people have an understanding of their history and a sense of identity.

Pathway plans are used effectively to help and encourage young people to develop key life skills; young people are given opportunities to become more independent. Young people are motivated to extend their skills such as learning how to cook. Overall, young people are receiving good levels of support and are making good progress to improve their life chances. They are nurtured toward independence by a staff team who know the young people's strengths and vulnerabilities.

Quality of care **good**

The emphasis on identifying and meeting young people's holistic needs is very good. Exploring young people's emotional and psychological health are central to the home's care planning processes. Young people enjoy supportive relationships with staff, especially with their key workers, that are based on effective communication

and trust. All staff appear motivated and genuinely interested in the young peoples' welfare. Young people are able to identify who they would go to with any concerns or worries. Effective strategies, including for example a week-long retreat, help young people to form attachments with staff.

Young people benefit from numerous opportunities, both formal and informal, to consult with members of staff and to voice their feelings and opinions. As a result, issues are addressed without the need to access the formal complaints procedure. The complaints procedure is robust; any complaints from young people are taken very seriously. The number of complaints is low.

Young people enjoy a range of activities such as swimming, bowling or going to comedy shows. Some young people have developed individual interests, for example in horses. However, young people say they would like to do more activities. More needs to be done to encourage them to develop interests and hobbies rather than leaving them with too much free time. A professional said that there is an expectation that staff engage young people in more structured activities.

Communal areas are tastefully decorated and help to create a warm, homely environment. Although young people are able to personalise their rooms, some work has yet to be completed, including some decorating and the provision of basic items such as a full length mirror or table lamp. The kitchen door is locked occasionally to safeguard young people. The impact of this on other young people in the home has not been assessed. Some young people are frustrated by this strategy.

Young people's health needs are met. They are encouraged to attend routine appointments, ensure they are up to date with vaccinations and access more specialist support, such as an orthodontist, as and when required. The looked after child nurse is also available to offer specialist advice. Some young people are now able to swallow tablets rather than being reliant on injections as they were previously.

Young people are learning to understand the nutritional value of having a good and healthy diet. They also have an appreciation of different cultures. Young people are encouraged and supported to explore their ethnic backgrounds and their belief systems.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Overall there are excellent arrangements to safeguard young people. Young people say they feel safe and secure at the setting. They feel comfortable in talking to their key workers. They make excellent progress in talking to other professionals, including for example a psychotherapist, about difficult and painful emotions. Consequently young people are able to find alternate ways of managing their feelings.

Effective management and adherence to robust policies ensure all are protected and

supported. The culture embedded in the home ensures that the young people benefit from a robust and rigorous approach which treats the young people's emotional and physical safety as paramount. The manager ensures that all the relevant agencies are informed of any safeguarding issues. A placing social worker said, 'If any child protection concerns are raised, these are dealt with appropriately by the home and referred to the necessary agency'. This practice ensures that strategies and plans can be developed. A minor shortfall was found in some paperwork; some documents do not clearly record the outcomes as agreed in consultation with other professionals, such as the local authority designated officer.

Staff work extremely well with other professionals, such as the home's clinical psychologist, to ensure that placement plans take into account the underlying psychological needs of young people. Comprehensive psychological assessments are completed and provide detailed guidance for staff. However, on occasion, the detail is not fully translated into support plans. For example, while there are a number of activities available for young people to engage in they have not been translated into more specific diversionary activities for individuals who are at risk of going missing from care. Clear individual risk management strategies around e-safety and the use of devices to access the internet are understood by staff but not written down in risk management plans.

Some young people make poor choices, such as going missing from care. There are extremely good procedures in place that are followed diligently by staff. This includes close work with other agencies, including the police and those with specialist knowledge of child sexual exploitation. Immediate action is taken to keep young people as safe as possible as well in addition to long-term psychological work to address the issues influencing their behaviour. Young people have every chance of success in the home and, overall, there is a reduction in the number of incidents of young people going missing.

Staff ensure that young people have the best possible care and support in consultation with a variety of other professionals. This includes the consultant clinical psychologist who is readily available to the young people. A cohesive approach gives young people the optimum opportunity to progress and find other, safer ways of expressing their difficult emotions. As a result, behaviours that challenge and require physical intervention are rare. Staff are appropriately trained to intervene only when absolutely necessary.

Young people live in a safe environment that is well maintained. Regular health and safety checks ensure the home is safe. External agencies certify the safety of equipment, including for example the fire alarm system. Young people know how to evacuate the building quickly in the event of an emergency.

The manager has been appointed since the last inspection and has applied to register with Ofsted. He has a child-care qualification and is undertaking a relevant management qualification. He is determined that young people have a positive experience of care, for example by ensuring there is a consistent staff team who are themselves well supported. The manager ensures that staff training is up to date and relevant to the young people's emerging needs. Young people receive care from a staff team who are enthusiastic about their roles. Morale is high and there is a positive atmosphere. A strong and visible leadership team support the manager. Staff and young people speak very positively about the new manager.

The quality of staff support, training and supervision means that staff feel appreciated, valued, and respected. Staff demonstrate their wealth of knowledge about young people's needs and are able to clearly articulate the action they take in response to challenging and complex situations. They have a diverse and wide-ranging mix of skills, experience and backgrounds. This is a positive contribution to working with young people who, because of their past experiences, are vulnerable and therefore at times require intensive levels of support and intervention. Models of therapeutic support are accessible to staff. This helps them understand the strategies being used to support young people in the home and implement the aims and objectives set out in the Statement of Purpose.

The manager regularly reviews the running of the home to ensure that good levels of care are maintained. Internal monitoring arrangements are rigorous and visits by an independent visitor, who reports monthly on the service being provided, are very effective. This means the quality of care that young people receive is under constant scrutiny and continually being improved.

Significant events are notified promptly to the appropriate authority. This means that incidents are dealt with appropriately and in consultation with other professionals. A professional said that the home is 'extremely good at communicating'.

The manager is proactive in developing plans for the future and is reviewing the development plan to further improve the quality of care and outcomes for young people. The previous recommendation to update some policies has been met.

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.