

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	07/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC014848
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Cornerways Children's Services Limited
Registered provider address	Ashcombe Court, Woolsack Way, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1LQ

Responsible individual	Sara Milner
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Ruth Coler

Inspection date	07/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
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

SC014848

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people have positive and trusting relationships with staff, which support them to make good progress in all areas of their lives.
- The support from the therapy team to the young people and staff enhances the services provided and helps staff to provide good care to young people.
- Staff negotiate well with young people. Staff listen to young people's views and act on them appropriately. This helps young people to feel valued and gain a sense of belonging.
- Behaviour management is a strength. Staff promote good behaviour well and manage difficult behaviour effectively. There are minimal numbers of restraints, and very few times when young people go missing or require sanctions to be given.
- Staff work hard to prevent young people from going missing. If they do go missing, staff act appropriately.
- Safeguarding is effective and supported by appropriate risk assessments to guide staff well.
- The provider has quickly recruited a new manager after the previous manager left and is planning a smooth induction to the role, which will minimise disruption to the young people's care.
- The staff team members work together well to provide consistent care, which reflects the individuality of each young person.
- Training is effective. Its impact on staff skills is evaluated and reviewed successfully.
- Placement plans and case records are varied in quality. When these are good, they provide a clear, objective and detailed picture of how to care for a young person and the support that has been provided.
- Systems to test and monitor the home's performance are not always effective.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meet(s) 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
13: (1) The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential and promotes their welfare. The registered person must (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	02/05/2017

Recommendations

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

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4).

In particular, managers should review whether the quality of recording is consistent in all young people's care plans and case records.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is one of two children's homes owned and run by a private company that also operates a fostering agency and a school. It has accommodation for up to six young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The service also provides support from therapists to individual young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/10/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
23/07/2015	Full	Good
03/03/2015	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people build trusting and supportive relationships with staff, which help them to move in successfully and progress well in all aspects of their lives. They appreciate the difference that living here has made for them, including understanding themselves better, managing health issues more effectively, engaging and re-engaging with their education and exploring any difficult emotions and issues that they have. Having good health is prioritised. While young people do not always want to be engaged in physical activities, staff promote them as part of young people's lives. Young people are encouraged to take up an active hobby, such as kick boxing, and the home has a small gym, which young people can use under staff supervision. Mealtimes are sociable occasions, which support healthy living by the food on offer. Choices of varied meals are promoted, and young people are encouraged to develop culinary skills, which help them to understand how to cook nutritionally balanced meals and to develop an interest in the food that they eat. Therapy sessions are well attended. Young people confirm that they like the therapists whom they see and that the support is helpful. For example, it has assisted them to understand themselves better and to manage difficult emotions more easily. Independence programmes suit each young person's age and understanding. The staff build on skills and gradually add more responsibilities over time. The plans take account of any issues that a young person is dealing with, and additional support is provided if necessary. This allows a young person to develop confidence in how to look after themselves and to feel secure that there are staff who will continue to look after them. This is in line with good parenting. Education is recognised as important and, when young people disengage with education, innovative plans are quickly made and successfully implemented to support its re-introduction. Educational achievements are recognised and praised. Young people are proud of their educational achievements and are ambitious for their futures. Staff help them to understand what they will need to work on to achieve their goals and support them to do so. A variety of in-house and external activities are well planned across the week. Young people often change their minds about what activities they wish to be engaged in. The activities coordinator works with the young people to ensure that they are involved in decisions about activities. She changes what is on offer to encourage their participation and develop their interests. The programme links to other needs that they have, such as developing their skills regarding independent travel.	

Care plans vary in quality. Some are up to date and informative; others less so. Immediate important changes are not always clear and leave staff with inconsistent information about how to look after a young person. However, care practice is extremely sensitive and individualised. It creates good bonds between staff and young people, which assist young people to engage in therapy sessions and to trust staff with sensitive information about their lives.

Value is given to consulting with young people about their views, wishes and feelings. This helps young people to gain a sense of belonging. There is a very homely feel, which young people really like, and they said that it is an important aspect of why they want to be here. They are fully involved in the development of how the home looks and what is available to them. Their bedrooms reflect their tastes and interests. However, this homely feel is diminished by staff visibly wearing long chains with keys on. The responsible individual is investigating how this can be changed.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Safeguarding concerns are acted on appropriately and managed effectively. The staff team minimises challenging and aggressive behaviours and promotes and rewards positive behaviours. Safeguarding knowledge is a thread through all of the services that the home provides. Staff work effectively with therapists to increase young people's abilities to keep themselves safe and to understand underlying reasons for any negative behaviours. When young people behave well, they are trusted and given greater freedom. This encourages them. One young person said that this had helped her to continue to want to behave well and to keep to her agreed plan. She is proud of the achievements that she has made in changing her behaviours. The reward scheme supports behaviour management plans effectively and underpins the aims and objectives for each young person. Young people rarely go missing. If they do, staff take appropriate action to find them and to support other agencies, such as the police, to look for them. The staff build knowledge of where young people might be and create networks of contacts who may know where the young person is. Staff know the young people well and understand what may trigger them to run away. They help young people to talk about what is worrying them and act attentively to prevent young people from leaving the premises. On many occasions, staff have prevented young people from	

leaving. If the young people leave, the staff follow them. Restraints and sanctions are rarely used. When they are, young people consider them to be fair and appropriate. No complaints have been made about the home since 2015.

Risk assessments cover a range of issues but are not always regularly updated. Actions to reduce or eliminate risk are generally clear and support staff to take appropriate action. However, some assessments are less clear and provide inconsistent information on the actions that staff should take to reduce risks.

Recruitment is well managed. If there are concerns about staff practice, these are investigated and acted on appropriately.

Health and safety concerns are suitably managed and ensure that the environment is maintained well.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
The previous registered manager left several weeks ago, and the provider has appointed a new manager who starts work at the end of March 2017. In the interim, the responsible individual is managing the home. The provider has already set plans in motion to support the young people, staff and the new manager. This is a positive move, as there have been several changes of manager in recent years. Young people consider that the support they receive from the staff team and the knowledge and abilities the staff have are a strength of this home. Young people said that they can ask staff anything and they will receive help. In particular, they commended the two deputies who have been a constant management presence throughout recent changes and a source of continuity and knowledge on which they could rely. Young people are matched carefully. Those young people living at the home agree that, while they are different, they get on well and like living together. Compatibility assessments are completed appropriately to support decisions about who comes to live here. Sufficient numbers of staff who know young people well are on duty each day. Rotas provide a good record of who is on each shift and when this changes. Staff work additional shifts to ensure that young people are cared for by people who know them well and can anticipate their needs. However, care is taken to ensure that staff do not work too many hours in any given week. When agency staff are employed, they have often worked here before and know the routines and young	

people living here.

Before Christmas, supervision was infrequent; for some staff this occurred less than once in more than two months. Since the New Year, staff supervisions have been more frequent. Records of supervision sessions held are clear. The records show reflective practice and note areas for development as well as how well the young people's needs are being met. Staff also receive regular group support from therapists. This assists the staff to reflect on how they can support each other as well as the young people.

Training is well organised and its effectiveness is monitored. This supports the managers to improve training when necessary, and to understand how it has successfully developed staff practice. All staff have recently attended a training course on how to work therapeutically with young people. Staff confirmed that they enjoyed the sessions and found it supported reflection on their care of young people. Records of key-working sessions show that staff use reflective practice with young people to help them to understand their behaviours and feelings better.

Partnerships are established successfully with relevant professionals who are positive about the care that young people receive. At times, communication could be improved. For example, monthly reports on young people's progress are not provided on time. This is disappointing, as the content of these reports is very clear, concise and informative.

The home's statement of purpose has recently been reviewed and sent to Ofsted as required. Furthermore, the requirement and recommendation from the last inspection report are met. This indicates that the provider takes action to meet legal requirements and to work in cooperation with Ofsted appropriately.

The home's internal and external systems for monitoring and reviewing the quality of care are seriously impacted by inconsistent scrutiny. This has, for example, led to some records being incomplete, plans such as local authority placement plans not being available on file, and medication administration records not being accurate. The responsible individual undertook a review of monitoring practices in December 2016 and noted many of the issues identified here. However, significant progress has yet to be made in ensuring that the quality of monitoring and evaluating practice results in improvements.

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 that 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 that 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 whom 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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