

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	23/07/2015
Unique reference number	SC014848
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Cornerways Children's Services Limited
Registered person address	Ashcombe Court, Woolsack Way, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1LQ

Responsible individual	Ms Sara Milner
Registered manager	Mr Andrew Fisher
Inspector	Miss Jennie Christopher

Inspection date	23/07/2015
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
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 enjoy highly individualised care and support and make significant progress during their time living in the home. The consistent approach to care ensures young people understand what is expected of them and the responses they can expect when they are upset or in crisis.
- Engagement in education increases during placement, particularly for those who have not been in formal education for significant periods of time. Some have recently taken exams and have plans for their post-16 education.
- Joint working is a key strength. The home have positive relationships with education, therapists and external advocacy services among others, in order to provide a holistic approach to care. Additionally, joint strategies between the home and the local youth club can help to locate young people when they are missing.
- Young people who are preparing to move to independence are supported through tailored packages to develop their skill base. In addition they are afforded the opportunity to remain in the home while they learn these skills and until they are deemed emotionally ready for their next step.
- Staff support young people's friendships in the community. They are proactive in organising community-based meetings if friends' homes are not deemed appropriate or if they live too far away. Further, staff facilitate family contact despite having to travel long distances to do this.

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 meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
In order to meet the engaging with the wider system standard the registered provider must: challenge the placing authority in order to obtain all relevant placement and review documents. (Regulation 5 (c))	31/08/2015
In order to meet the positive relationships standard the registered provider must: encourage each child to take responsibility for their behaviour, in accordance with their age and understanding. This is with particular regard to house-wide rules and bans on specific items where only some living in the home require this. (Regulation 11 (2) (a)(iii))	31/08/2015
The registered person must ensure that the policy in relation to young people being missing provides reference to guidance from all local authorities from which young people in the home are placed. (Regulation 34 (5)(b))	31/08/2015
The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes an end date to the measure; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure and that within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is Authorised by the registered person to do so has spoken to the member of staff about the measure including whether it is an appropriate sanction; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (2) (a)(iv)(v) (b) (c))	31/08/2015

Recommendations

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

- Ensure staff know how to respond to strategies agreed between young people and their individual therapists. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards, April 2015, Page 33, paragraph 7.3)
- Each child should have permission for staff to administer first aid and non-prescription medication from a person with parental responsibility for them recorded in their relevant plan. For looked-after children, this permission should be sought and arranged by the child's social worker. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards, April 2015, Page 35, paragraph 7.14)
- Ensure all young people's files contain their pre-placement impact and risk assessments. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards, April 2015, Page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- Ensure all records are kept up to date and stored securely whilst they remain in the home. All records must be kept up to date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards, April 2015, Page 62, paragraph 14.3)

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, two residential homes and an independent school.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/03/2015	CH - Interim	declined in effectiveness
06/11/2014	CH - Full	Good
29/01/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress
24/07/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Young people enjoy some excellent relationships with staff, who have a clear understanding of each individual's needs. They are positive about the home and enjoy living here. Staff challenge young people appropriately, but also provide them with unconditional support to progress in their lives. Young people approach staff with queries, worries or concerns and benefit from frank and open discussions. Observed topics included friendships and relationships, family contact and conflict, alongside general interest and interaction at the dining table. Young people benefit from care that is designed to meet their individual needs. Staff liaise with education staff in the organisation's school, and with therapists to develop comprehensive care plans which focus of individual culture and identity. Staff ensure consistency in approach and purposeful target setting through liaison with social workers and corresponding updating to plans in line with reviews and changes in behaviour. Young people are encouraged to share their views at reviews, although plans are yet to be fully young person centred. Those who are preparing for independence are helped to budget and manage household chores. They are also provided with day-to-day skills such as sourcing gas and electric providers and seeking accommodation and employment. Young people of compulsory education age attend the organisations school. Many have struggled to attend school prior to their placement, often not engaging for several months or years. Staff have, with perseverance and skill motivated young people to now attend as programmed. This has resulted in them progressing in line with their peers; young people have gained recognised qualifications in various subjects. In addition to formal education, individuals are engaged in a variety of socially and emotionally stimulating activities. While most have chosen not to attend organised clubs or events, they do go for walks with staff, complete arts and crafts and one attends a local youth club. They are happy with the activities on offer and have tried various pastimes, such as horse riding, but are not keen to pursue these. Staff have recently undertaken training in therapeutic play and engage individuals in this appropriately. Young people are helped to understand healthy lifestyles and what this means for them. Staff promote a balanced diet and healthy eating and encourage individuals to exercise. Smoking is discouraged, although young people are not currently motivated to stop. Records of some health appointments are confusing, although	

all routine checks have taken place. Young people have the opportunity to attend individual therapy and staff have regular therapeutic consultations to provide consistency. However staff are not always clear on how to respond to coping techniques young people have agreed with their therapists. For example, a young person giving staff letters containing their thoughts at bedtime.

Contact with friends and family is supported by staff. Staff are thoughtful in their approach to individuals meeting friends from the organisations school, recognising that family homes may not be suitable. Arrangements are made to meet in neutral locations to ensure friendships can be maintained. Staff accompany young people to family contact, often travelling long distances to facilitate this. They also have an excellent understanding of the impact visits may have on individuals.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Young people say they feel safe in the home and know that staff care about their welfare and well-being. They identify staff in the home they would go to if they were worried or upset, although they do not always manage to do this. Staff understand each individual's vulnerabilities, and do all they can to keep them safe. They are confident in processes to follow should they be concerned for a young person's safety or welfare. Young people go missing from the home on occasion. Responses to incidents are robust, with staff following individuals, looking for them in known locations or attempting to contact them by mobile phone. The protocols for each local authority that have young people placed are not available within the home. Staff have strong links with the local police and other organisations. For example, they have contacts at the local youth club and have agreed protocols should a specific young person arrive there without staff dropping them off and conversely if the leave without staff collecting them. This joint working extends to youth workers discussing the risks of being missing with the young person and alerting the home and police to any inappropriate friendships they may have. High risk strategy meetings are convened to discuss how to protect young people who are missing on a regular basis. When young people have been missing they are welcomed back to the home by staff and meet with an external charity worker to explore safety. Young people, as needed, have access to external advocates to further consider the reasons they may go missing and how to improve their situation. When deemed appropriate, young people are taken on short breaks with staff to consider inappropriate behaviour and consider the risks they may be vulnerable to.	

An example is a young person creating a scrap book of activities and discussions with staff about the risks of being missing, how to form appropriate relationships and considering what could be exploitative relationships.

Self-injurious behaviour has reduced dramatically for some young people while living in the home. Young people who injure themselves benefit from consistent support from staff. Joint working with therapists and mental health professionals has ensured young people gain other coping strategies and staff respond in a manner that best helps them.

Behaviour management is well planned and consistent. Restraint is rarely used and usually to guide young people away from situations. Some home rules need to be reviewed to determine if they remain appropriate for the current group living in the home. Sanctions do not fit with the homes ethos as measures imposed are often not relevant or individualised. Records do not demonstrate staff have reviewed the effectiveness of the sanction with young people.

Bullying is not outwardly raised as an issue, although staff tackle dominant personalities and relationships within the home on a regular basis in house meetings. Young people's meetings are also used to discuss e-safety.

Young people are able to take age-appropriate risks in line with their abilities. This includes time in the community, using public transport and collecting medication from the chemist. The home is physically safe and there are regular checks on fire detection equipment. Recruitment procedures are robust including pre-employment checks.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement
The home currently has a Registered Manager who has relevant experience and is appropriately qualified for the role. He was not available during the inspection and the home was being well run by the deputy managers. The Registered Manager has recently decided to leave and the home already has a replacement to ensure continuity in management. During this period the registered individual has been supporting the running of the home. Most aspects of the home are well run. Young people are mainly at the centre of all plans and staff are confident in their roles, despite feeling some management decisions are not consistent with the team agreements or the homes ethos. They say they support each other well and work together as a team. Staff all receive	

regular supervision that provides sufficient challenge in order to improve practice. Appraisals are up to date and identify training for the upcoming year.

Reports from independent monitoring visits in relation to Regulation 44 are strong and provide a good overview of the current service and young people's progress, while providing critical oversight. Monthly managers monitoring is not currently providing the scrutiny required as many records including chronologies of safeguarding events are not clear. The senior management are in the process of devising the format for the six monthly evaluations of managers monitoring.

Young peoples' comprehensive care plans are combined with risk assessments providing a combined document which is easy to understand and implement. They demonstrate sound joint working with partner agencies to ensure consistency in the approach to care. While the plans are young person focused they are from the point of view of the adult, not young person. Progress is not always clear within these plans. Not all files contain pre-placement risk assessments, although when in place, these are comprehensive and provide a sound evaluation of the needs of the individual. Placing authority documents are also not available in some files, including consent to administer medication and seek emergency treatment. There has been insufficient challenge to social workers to gain this information.

The requirements and recommendations set at the last inspection have all been acted upon and implemented into daily practice. Incidents and events that require notification have been forwarded to Ofsted and other relevant parties in a timely manner.

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 looked after children 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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