

SC022464

Registered provider: PIC Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is one of several led and managed by a private company. The home is able to provide care and support to one young person who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 29 June to 4 July 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 28 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The young person said that he feels safe here. He said he can talk to staff and that they listen to him and support him.

- He has a positive relationship with staff who understand his needs and vulnerabilities. As a result, the incidents of him being missing from the home are reducing. Staff work effectively with others, such as the managers of other children's homes, to help keep the young person safe.
- Staff provide a caring, nurturing environment for the young person. As a result, he is beginning to make progress with his education.
- The young person is encouraged to try new activities, which increases his participation in the wider community. Shared activities such as attending cadets or ice hockey training encourages him to interact socially, develop tolerance and broaden his experiences.
- The young person is helped and encouraged to see those people who are important to him. This means he is able to rebuild and maintain positive relationships with family members.
- The young person's health needs are proactively supported. The home works in partnership with healthcare professional to ensure that the young person's health and well-being needs are met.
- The young person's wishes and feelings, identity and sense of individuality are sensitively explored and supported by the staff, who ensure that he is at the centre of practice in the home.
- Despite delays beyond the registered manager's control in receiving reports from Ofsted, he has addressed a number of the issues identified at previous inspections. For example, the young person is now in education.
- The increased managerial support means that there is now clear daily managerial oversight of the home. The deputy is new to post and is working well with staff and the registered manager to support the young person.
- Shortfalls found in this inspection have not directly impacted on the young person's welfare. Improvements have already been implemented or plans are in place to address areas for development.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Enhance the quality of record-keeping. This is because records, such as the placement plan and missing from care risk assessment, contain historical information that masks the actual care provided to the young person.
- Ensure that the registered manager and HMCI received reports from the independent person in a timely manner, and ensure that they provide a critical analysis of the quality of record-keeping.
- Encourage young people to record their comments in the records.
- Enhance the recording on staff rotas so that they clearly reflect when the registered manager is working in the home.
- Improve the storage and administration of medication to minimise the risk of cross infection.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/03/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
16/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
29/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
21/01/2016	Full	Outstanding

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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
Ensure that the registered person maintain records ("case records") for each child, which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b) and (c)) In particular, ensure that the young person's placement plan, health care plan, risk assessment, missing from care records and behaviour plans reflect the current care and support provide. Any historical and/or conflicting information is removed.	25/08/2017
Ensure that the independent person provides a copy of the independent person's report to HMCI. (Regulation 44 (7)(a))	25/08/2017
Ensure that the registered person makes arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medication into the children's home. (Regulation 23 (1)) In particular, ensure that the storage of controlled medication and the methods used for counting the amounts of medication in stock are robust.	25/08/2017
Ensure that the registered person maintains in the home the records in Schedule 4. (Regulation 37 (2)(a)) In particular, ensure that staff rotas are available on-site and that they record the times when the registered manager is working in the home.	25/08/2017

Recommendations

- Ensure that the registered manager makes best use of the independent and internal monitoring of the home to ensure continuous improvement. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24.) In particular, ensure that reports are submitted to the registered manager in a timely manner so that they can take the appropriate action. Also, ensure that the record-keeping is robust and that plans, such as the home's development plan, are bespoke to the home.

- Ensure that the registered person has a workforce development plan which can fulfil the related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8) In particular, it is bespoke to this home.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The young person has a trusted and secure relationship with staff. He knows that they care about him and want him to do well. Staff spend time talking and listening to the young person. Consequently, they have a good understanding of his needs and vulnerabilities. Social workers are complimentary about the staff. They said, 'They (staff) are working hard to help keep the young person safe and have a good understanding of his needs.' Consequently, the young person is beginning to have a sense of belonging here.

The young person's parent said, 'They (staff) understand (name of child). They get him, and help keep him safe.' They said that the young person is not as 'depressed' as he was living in his previous homes, and that he now seems happy here. The parent went on to say that this is because of the positive relationships he has with staff.

Staff can explain the support that they are providing to the young person. However, his placement plan, healthcare plan, behaviour management plan and a number of risk assessment do not reflect what is actually happening on a day-to-day basis. This is because of the amount of archive material contained in the documents. Consequently, record-keeping is not yet robust.

The young person's medical needs are met well in practice. However, the storage of his medication and the administration of this is not secure. This is because the medication safe is also used to store other items, such as the home's budget. Also, on the day of inspection, a member of staff placed the medication on a book to count the number of tablets in stock. Consequently, these shortfalls increase the risk of cross contamination.

The young person is developing an understanding of how cannabis can affect his mental health and well-being. He was using cannabis on a regular basis, but this has stopped in recent weeks. He is listening more to staff and the 'Addactions' specialist workers about the impact this can have on his health. This has meant he is now making a positive decision not to use cannabis, which is a big step forward for him.

Education has been an issue for the young person. He has had extended periods out of education, but is now attending school full-time. This has not been without its challenges. The registered manager and staff are strong advocates for the young person and are confident to challenge schools when they feel that they have been unfair to him. For example, staff challenge exclusions or the quality of the one-to-one support provided, and work with schools to prevent a reoccurrence of the issues.

The social worker said the staff have high aspirations for the young person and are working with him to help him to succeed. They said the registered manager works well

with them and the virtual headteacher to ensure that the young person receives the right support so that he can continue to make progress with his education.

The young person's attendance at school is improving, with 76.2% attendance, and he has a target now of 90%. He is on target to complete KS1 and KS2 in mathematics and English. This is a massive achievement for the young person. He said, 'I want to be able to finish school, then be a chef or do agency work.' The young person has an understanding about his behaviour in school, saying that he felt it was 'Good. I can sometimes make the wrong decisions, but I am working on it.'

The young person spends a lot of time out with friends. He is beginning to build and make positive relationships. However, staff acknowledge that he can be 'easily lead' and needs continual support to make the right decisions. The young person said that he enjoyed going to cadets and may go again, and is looking forward to the ice hockey training. These activities and opportunities are having a positive effect on his self-esteem. They are enabling him to expand his friendship base and to try new experiences.

The young person is being helped to learn a range of skills that will help and support him in the future. He is actively encouraged to be as independent as possible in relation to his starting points. He is confident to plan menus, prepare meals with staff, and shop for food and clothing items within a set budget.

The young person is increasing in confidence. He is much more able to explain his wishes and views and knows that staff will listen to him. He knows that he may not always get what he is asking for, but that staff will examine the reasons why. During the inspection, he confidently spoke to staff about a concern he had regarding a comment made to him by a young person from another home. Staff took immediate action, which provided reassurances to the young person.

The young people keep in regular contact with those people who are important to them. Staff worked well to reinitiate contact with the young person's family following a breakdown in communication. Staff encourage the family to talk to them and to visit the young person at the home, to have a meal or share an activity with him. This has helped the family and young person to rebuild their relationship. Consequently, the young person now spends quality time with his family.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

High priority is given to ensuring young people's safety and well-being. Staff are well versed in the home's safeguarding and missing from care procedures, and they take effective action when a young person goes missing or makes a disclosure. They are working well with other children's homes to reduce the incidents of young people being missing together. The young person is well aware of the communication between the homes and the plans they have in place. He said, 'It's ok, I know why they are doing this.' His social worker said that the home is working well with them and other agencies to help keep the young person safe. The social worker said the reports of missing from care episodes are detailed and provide them with insight as to where the young person has been and action taken to keep them safe.

There have been several incidents of the young person leaving the home at night via his bedroom window, and going missing with a young person from another home in the company. This has led to some incidents of criminality. The home has taken swift, decisive action to address this with the registered manager of the other home. This means that there is greater collaboration in reporting young people as missing and staff's ability to locate them quickly. Similarly, they know the young person's friends and are liaising with other homes outside of the company. This effective communication means staff can build a bigger picture of where the young person is going.

Police missing from care co-ordinators confirmed that the registered manager had notified them that the young person was living in the home. This enabled them to put plans into place to help keep the young person safe. The young person has a prolific prior history of being missing from a very young age, and this has included extended periods. Police said the home is supporting the young person well and this has seen a reduction in his episodes of being missing. He has also not had any extended periods of missing, which is a big achievement. Police missing from care co-ordinators said that the young person is 'a follower and he is very proficient at using public services. He has the intelligence to get to a place of safety, for example contacting the police if he cannot get home.'

Staff are aware of the risks associated with the young person and the actions that they are expected to take to keep the young person safe. However, the information in the young person's risk assessment is not robust. This is because it does not provide sufficient written information about the risks to the young person, such as where they may go if they are reported as missing, and contains conflicting information. While staff were able to demonstrate a sound knowledge of what they are doing to help to keep the young person safe in practice, a lack of robust recording and clear guidance has the potential to negatively impact on him.

There are no incidents of physical intervention in the home. The young person is generally polite and courteous to staff. However, one recent incident in the home has had a significant impact on him. This involved an altercation with a member of staff. Since this event, the young person has reflected on the incident and the part that his use of cannabis may have played in this. He is remorseful and is seeking to apologise for his actions.

The home reflects the young person's personality and style. It is spotless and the young person keeps it neat and tidy. The young person has plans for his room and would like to redecorate it. He is confident to negotiate this with staff. He said he knows about the window restrictors and why they are there. However, he still wants to sometimes go out at night. He is aware of the dangers of leaving via his bedroom window, but says that he is good at climbing. He is beginning to work with staff on alternative strategies to this, such as waking staff at night when he needs to go out.

Young people are safeguarded, as visitors to the home are vetted and appropriately supervised during their visit. The home and environment are safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A committed and experienced manager leads and manages the home. He is also the registered manager of another one-bedroom home in close proximity to this home. The managerial oversight of the home has been improved as a result of the recent appointment of a deputy manager. He is a qualified and experienced member of staff who knows the young person well. The registered manager and deputy are working well together to ensure that both homes have daily managerial oversight. However, staff rotas do not effectively record when the registered manager is actually in the home. A detailed development plan is in place. However, this is a generic document and does not reflect the actual developmental needs of this home. The registered manager is working towards his level 5 management qualification and plans are underway for the deputy to begin his.

The staff team works well together to provide consistency and stability to the young person. Staff said that they are supported well by the registered manager. Regular training opportunities mean that staff's knowledge and skills are regularly updated in areas such as radicalisation, child sexual exploitation, and missing from care.

Record-keeping in the home is improving and is demonstrating the young person's time in the home. However, there is a lack of clarity in the records as to what the actual day-to-day care needs for the young person are. This is because the records now contain large amounts of historical and conflicting information within the young person's missing from care risk assessment, care plans, behaviour plans and risk assessments. This does not promote clarity in the records and means vital information can be lost or hard to locate. The impact of this is minimised because staff have a good understanding of the young person's needs and vulnerabilities.

These issues have not been identified through internal or external monitoring of the home. Consequently, monitoring of the home's practice and record-keeping is not yet robust. Reports by the independent person are not routinely sent to HMCI in a timely manner to enable the regulatory body to keep abreast of the independent person's findings and the home's response to these. For example, the registered manager only received the independent person's report for April during the inspection. Consequently, this makes it difficult for the registered manager to effectively address any shortfall and to promote continuous improvement. Similarly, some reports that are sent to HMCI are not always in date order.

The staff and registered manager work collaboratively with other professionals. They are confident to challenge other agencies, such as schools, to ensure that the young person receives the right support and encouragement to make continuous progress.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC022464

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: PIC Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: 2 North Street, Haydock, St. Helens, Merseyside WA11 0TW

Responsible individual: Carol Fletcher

Registered manager: Gregg Dinsmore

Inspector

Chris Scully, social care inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2017