

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	17 May 2016
Unique reference number	SC039087
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Care Afloat Limited
Registered person address	158 Birkrig, Skelmersdale, Lancashire WN8 9HP

Responsible individual	Michael Fletcher
Registered manager	Carol McKenna
Inspector	Mark Kersh

Inspection date	17 May 2016
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	Good

SC039087

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The service provides young people with an alternative to community living. It gives them new experiences and allows them to reflect on their background and make positive changes in their life.
- Young people are integrated into the daily operation of the narrowboat. They are given responsibilities and trust. This provides a strong foundation for building and sustaining quality relationships on board.
- Staff work hard to provide young people with a sensitive and nurturing environment in which they can start to address other issues in their lives.
- There is regular consultation and young people's views are listened to and acted upon. They know their plan of care and the expectations that their placing authority has on them. Plans are reviewed and involve young people.
- Established partnership working with external services promotes young people's health, helps them to achieve in education and provides them access to services to support their emotional, social and psychological well-being.
- Staff have access to vehicles for transporting young people from the various locations that they visit. Young people are able to remain in touch with family and friends that live a long way from the service. This reduces young people's anxieties.
- Robust arrangements are in place to identify and manage young people's risks. The locations that young people visit are assessed and risks known by staff. These arrangements help young people to become increasingly safe.
- Young people are safe and say that they feel safe. Their understanding and competency is tested and checked around safety aspects when on board as well as when travelling around the canal network.
- Rural locations prevent young people from previous risk-taking behaviours. Staff are responsive to known strategies should young people go missing or be at risk of exploitation or self-harm.
- Young people's behaviour is managed well by trained staff. There are clear expectations of boundaries and rules on board. This promotes young people's well-being and allows them to manage their behaviour.
- Staff have a good understanding of a young person's needs and vulnerabilities. They work effectively to make sure that needs are met and risks are reduced.
- Leadership and management are focused on improving the experiences and progress of young people.

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
16: Statement of purpose In order to meet the management and administrative regulations, the registered person must— (a) keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and (b) notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision (Regulation 16 (3)).	30 June 2016

Recommendations

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

- A record of supervision should be kept for staff, including the manager. The record should provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with Regulation 33 (4)(b) ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3).

Full report

Information about this children's home

- The service is registered to accommodate one young person with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.
- The service is privately owned.
- The service provides young people with single occupancy accommodation on a 71-foot narrowboat which travels around the canal network.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24 March 2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
15 June 2015	Full	Good
13 March 2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
30 July 2014	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people experience a sensitive and nurturing approach which is in contrast to their previous experiences prior to admission. One of the aims of the service is to create opportunities for young people to reflect on past events and change their ways, in preparation for a return to their own community or group living accommodation. The manager and staff work hard to deliver well on this objective, which is part of the ethos of the service as outlined in the statement of purpose document. Young people develop positive relationships with staff and build their social skills, which facilitates their progress and development. They benefit from the attachments made with staff, learn to trust staff and make significant changes in their lives. They are very much involved, given training, responsibilities and trust. All who work and live on the narrowboat are part of its daily operation, which includes health and safety on board. The current young person has enjoyed new experiences and made progress from their starting point. Consultation takes place daily and the views of young people are listened to and acted upon. Comments from the present young person where positive in relation to the services that he receives on board and include: ▪ 'I am listened to and we all get on well and help each other.' ▪ 'I have learned so much and they (staff) involve me in everything.' ▪ 'I'm enjoying living here and I am changing my old ways. ' ▪ 'My math[s] and English has [have] improved and I enjoy learning.' Staff provide a strong focus for young people to continue their education. Young people with a history of educational disruption and non-attendance have an opportunity to attend the organisation's off-site school. Where this is not possible, a qualified tutor will provide education for a young person on board the narrowboat. This prevents young people from falling behind. Alongside this, the manager continues to plan with placing authorities the future needs and re-engagement into school for young people. Staff actively promote contact with family members to increase young people's sense of identity. Staff carefully assess its suitability to ensure that contact is safe and well planned. Staff maintain positive working relationships with family members to promote good information sharing. Transport is not an issue as staff have access to regularly maintained fleet cars. Facilities are arranged for family members who live a considerable distance from the service, ensuring that young	

people maintain contact with those people significant in their lives.

These transport arrangements ensure that young people's health needs are identified and met. Young people are registered with health services and the location of National Health Service direct facilities are known and recorded on the local area risk assessment. This ensures that should young people require medical attention while travelling, staff have the necessary information to transport them to these services. Effective assessments, planning and working in partnership with external agencies enable young people to be supported by qualified professionals should they need psychological support or intervention.

Young people's hobbies and interests are promoted and catered for. Activities are enjoyed by young people and have an educational element attached. For example, travelling to historical sites and cities. The canal history is well known by staff and communicated to young people. The current young person has sound knowledge on how important it was that the industrial revolution relied on the waterways for transporting materials and goods. Route planning, map reading and discussions around sustainable energy and protection of the environment contribute to the young person's education package.

A social worker was complimentary about the services and care that the young person receives and says:

- 'They are doing such a good job and I feel the young person has turned a corner, I have no issues with the placement. The staff keep me updated and involve my young person in planning and review meetings. The only thing I would say is the social isolation, although he does meet people on the canal and peers on activities.'

As space is limited on board the narrowboat, not all young people will adapt to this service and careful planning and a commitment from young people is needed in order for them to enjoy the experiences on board. Space and privacy can be compromised.

Consideration of young people's well-being is taken into account daily, recorded within observation sheets and ensures that young people are comfortable in their surroundings. Information on how to complain and who to contact, including independent organisations, is provided to young people. The present young person confirmed this and he has no issues or complaints about his living environment or the support provided to him by staff.

Careful scrutiny of referral information takes place along with planning for young people to be accommodated on the service. Initial assessment of a young person's needs ensures that agreed plans are in place to identify and work towards changing behaviours and risks. Over time, young people are gradually integrated into the community and spend more time with their peers. All of this is carefully monitored and assessed. This prepares young people well for their future and their daily involvement in the operation of the narrowboat strengthens their independence skills.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Risks are identified from referral information, planning meetings and discussions with young people. Detailed risk assessments are in place and colour coded to the traffic light system. Generic risks, such as on board safety, operating canal locks, towpaths, tunnels and water, are all initially coded high risk (red). Young people from the point of accommodation sign up to a competency crew course. In time, their learning and experiences of being involved in the running of the narrowboat together with health and safety awareness reduce the risks to young people travelling on the waterways. The young person has completed his competency crew course and gained accredited certification. He is fully involved in the daily operation of the narrowboat and has a good safety understanding of the risks. As a result, risks to the young person have decreased and been coded low risk (green). Other risks, particularly assessed on previous behaviours, have also reduced. This risk assessment system is a good tool. Risks coded amber (medium) further safeguard young people. While the young person is not at risk, it highlights the potential of risk and includes the strategies for staff to follow if any concerning behaviours or incidents take place. Progress on previous behaviours has been made. For example, previous going missing from home behaviour is now non-existent, substance misuse is not an issue and criminal activity or being criminalised is a thing of the past. There have been no restraints or sanctions imposed for inappropriate behaviour. The young person has achieved all his daily incentives, which are rewarded financially and in part contribute to an item that the young person wishes to purchase. The young person is safe on the narrowboat and says that he feels safe. Staff are trained in recognising, responding and reporting suspicions of abuse and are up to date in their knowledge in relation to child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and internet safety. There are no safeguarding concerns and there is detailed information on board within the local area risk assessment in relation to the areas that the narrowboat travels to. Staff are regularly checked and vetted and a new staff member confirmed the robust recruitment process he went through before commencing work with young people. Recruitment checks seen as part of this inspection did not raise any cause for concern and comply with the requirements set out in the regulations. All visitors are required to produce identification and sign in and, as space is limited on board, young people are never left alone with visitors. This applies when young people come off the narrowboat as staff will accompany them in the local areas. These systems and arrangements protect young people and keep them safe.	

Daily health and safety checks are carried out and recorded and the narrowboat is certificated and complies with the legal requirements set out by the Boat Safety Scheme. Maintenance checks are carried out by the skipper and any repair work is undertaken by qualified engineers. Refurbishment has been carried out previously and a refit of door frames and new doors are scheduled for later in the year (2016).

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The narrowboat is managed by a registered manager who is qualified and experienced. She has the necessary qualification to skipper the narrowboat, along with three other qualified skippers employed on the service. There are a total of six staff members, inclusive of the registered manager, who work on the narrowboat and four of these are qualified to level 3 or above. Two staff are currently undertaking their diploma and are expected to complete this in line with the two year timescale required by Regulation 32. This means that by September 2016 all staff on the narrowboat will be qualified. Staffing is sufficient to provide a good service to a young person, and the qualified skippers, including the registered manager, are together with the two current unqualified staff intensive support workers for young people. The responsible individual supports the registered manager and provides regular supervision to her. The registered manager supervises staff each month and all annual appraisals are due to be signed off as complete in June 2016. Staff report supervision is effective in keeping them focused on the young person's needs, while also providing them with an opportunity for professional development and career progression. Staff confirm that they have good-quality training opportunities and a training matrix shows courses attended and completed. Future dates are also in place for refresher training. It is evident through the records kept on the narrowboat, the young person's plan and dialogue with the manager, staff, social worker and the current young person, the extent to which the young person has made progress from his starting point in the service. Staff and the manager know the young person well, where he is at and what support he needs in preparation for moving on. Records of staff and the registered manager's supervision are signed by the supervisor and supervisee. However, on occasions when supervision has not been carried out, the records do not show a reason for this. As a result, a recommendation is made. This is to ensure that the records show evidence of supervision being carried out in line with the regulations. Staffing shift patterns are lengthy, often covering a week at a time. Staff have no	

issues and say that this way of working provides a young person with consistency and continuity. All staff members confirm that these hours of work do not impact on their own work life balance.

Young people enjoy and experience new adventures on this service and it is managed in their best interests. The narrowboat meets the aims and objectives of the statement of purpose document and children's guide. Young people, social workers and families are clear about the services and support that the narrowboat provides.

While the statement of purpose document is informative and clearly describes the services provided, it has not been updated from November 2015. Since that time, a new staff member has joined the service and his details were not contained within this document. As a result, a requirement is made. This is to ensure that the statement of purpose document is kept under review, and where appropriate revise it and to forward a revised copy to Ofsted in line with the regulations. This will ensure that the regulator is kept informed in relation to any changes within the service.

The service development plan and internal and external monitoring systems are in place. The manager regularly audits the paperwork that staff complete and any shortfalls are promptly addressed. An independent person reports each month on how the service effectively safeguards young people and how young people's well-being is promoted. These arrangements ensure that the manager and staff know the strengths and weaknesses of the service and take decisive and effective action when improvement is needed.

No requirements or recommendations were made at the last inspection. One requirement and one recommendation are made at this inspection.

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 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 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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