

# SC042147

Registered provider: Child First Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private organisation. It is registered to accommodate up to six young people of either gender who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

**Inspection dates:** 20 to 21 December 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

**Date of last inspection:** 31 August to 1 September 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** inadequate

## Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Monitoring visit carried out on 24 October 2017.

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people have made good progress while living at this home. They enjoy warm and supportive relationships with the adults who care for them.
- The manager and members of staff advocate strongly with external agencies on behalf of the young people. This has led to significant progress, especially in areas such as attendance at school.
- Good communication is maintained with key agencies. This ensures that young people's plans are cohesive, and that there is a strong sense of everyone working together for the benefit of the young people.
- Members of staff show resilience and determination when supporting the young people, especially during times of anxiety and distress. This has led to a more settled atmosphere in the home.
- The manager and responsible individual work well together to support the staff, and show good insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the home.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Some records are not compliant with regulations, and need to be updated.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 31/08/2017      | Full            | Inadequate              |
| 07/12/2016      | Full            | Requires improvement    |
| 25/04/2016      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 24/09/2015      | Full            | Good                    |

## 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   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>13: The leadership and management standard.</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard, in particular paragraph (1), the registered person must:</p> <p>(2)(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>This is with specific reference to managers ensuring that all aspects of staff recording, in particular records relating to behaviour management and risk assessments, are reviewed and updated in line with the home's policies and procedures and the regulation.</p>                                                                                                                                                                         | 02/02/2018 |
| <p>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 the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and 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 ("the authorised person") has spoken to the user about the measure and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; 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.</p> <p>(Regulation 35(a)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p> | 02/02/2018 |

### Recommendations

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4).
- This is with specific reference to ensuring that records are kept up to date, and

are accurate, in particular risk assessments and daily room checks.

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. They must comply with relevant health and safety legislation (alarms, food hygiene etc); however in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. This includes redecorating and maintaining the home as required ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9). This is with reference to ensuring that smoking detritus is cleared away from the area by the back door.

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Young people make good progress while living in this home. Members of staff show resilience and determination in supporting them and this has led to trusting and warm relationships being developed. The young people speak highly of the staff and feel comfortable in their company. The level of trust developed has enabled them to share their thoughts, feelings and anxieties. The opportunities to reflect on their pasts have helped the young people to make progress and develop improved coping skills and insight into their behaviours.

Since the last inspection, the young people have improved their attendance at their education settings. This is a significant achievement. Members of staff have been instrumental in this improvement through their determination, advocacy and drive on behalf of the young people. This has led to a sense of achievement for everyone concerned.

Each young person has a plan of care that is carefully thought out. These plans inform members of staff about which strategies and approaches work best for each young person. The young people are aware of their targets and goals, and are appreciative of the assistance which staff give. Young people experience success and gain a sense of pride in their accomplishments. For example, staff helped a young person to improve contact with his birth family; this has increased his links in the community, improved his skills in independent travel and lessened missing episodes.

Staff help the young people to manage conflict and frustration. The young people acknowledge the guidance that they have had in this area. 'I don't get so angry so often now,' said a young person. Another young person mentioned that, when he is becoming angry and aggressive, engaging in the strategy of 'talk and walk' with members of staff has helped him to think before reacting impulsively and destructively. This determination and insight from members of staff has helped the young people in a meaningful and effective manner.

Members of staff actively promote and assist the young people to take part in activities

in the community. This is often with direct staff support, due to the young people's anxieties and their possible need for immediate reassurance. The young people's vulnerabilities are borne in mind very sensitively by staff during any community activities and this approach has led to increased opportunities for them.

Young people are nurtured and guided to develop their social skills and confidence. They receive well-planned support that enables them to develop their independence skills. This is set at a rate and level which they understand. Plans cover areas such as road and cycling safety, self-care, healthy lifestyles and hygiene, as well as independent travel, budgeting and cooking. Each young person has made progress in these areas due to the personalised care and nurturing they receive.

It is clear that the young people's opinions and feelings are valued and promoted. They have numerous opportunities to voice these in formal and informal ways. Consequently, the young people feel they can influence how the home is run. For example, they have been able to choose decor and activities, and have been involved in and consulted on changing the reward system used in the home. All of the young people are aware of external professionals to whom they can talk in order to voice their concerns.

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

Young people speak very positively about how safe and secure the staff help them to feel. They acknowledge the guidance that members of staff have given them in dealing with frustrations and in reducing their risk-taking behaviours. One young person said, 'They talk you down, help with your anger.'

An area of particular strength is the staff's perseverance and resilience when they are working with young people who present very challenging behaviour. Members of staff have resolutely and unconditionally stood by the young people during these periods and the young people's feedback about this care is overwhelmingly positive. This approach has led to warm and supportive relationships, and improvements in the young people's behaviour.

Positive behaviour is encouraged and rewarded. The young people earn extra treats for doing well, and enjoy the credit and praise they receive. For example, a young person was rewarded with a cinema trip after a difficult meeting with an external professional. This was significant progress for this young person, who has struggled to present himself in a positive light at previous meetings.

Most records of physical restraint are of a good standard and show that the young people and members of staff are given opportunities to reflect on what happened and how to avoid similar situations. On one occasion, the record lacked detail and did not show that the incident had been robustly explored or resolved by the manager. Although this was only one incident, it was a missed opportunity and did not meet regulatory requirements for such a record.

The home has clear procedures that govern searches, and the circumstances under which these can be carried out. The agreed protocol for room checks for one young person has not been consistently recorded, even though staff and managers confirmed these checks had been carried out in practice. Members of staff were seen to engage meaningfully with a young person regarding the use of protective equipment during cycling and he was seen to respond very well. However, the risk assessment regarding this activity was not thorough and gave no guidance for staff to follow in the event that the young person did not cooperate.

There are clear protocols in place regarding the responses expected from members of staff if a young person is absent without permission. These protocols are followed effectively and staff have enabled young people to return safely. Staff balance the need to protect through close supervision with the need for appropriate support, in order to help young people develop their independence skills, build their confidence and social awareness, and subsequently become able to access the local community safely.

Members of staff and young people are aware of internet safety and the possible dangers associated with the use of social media. Young people's internet use is carefully monitored and there have been no incidents which have needed to be addressed or have caused concerns for their safety.

All members of staff have been trained in safeguarding and know who to inform if they have any concerns about a young person's well-being or safety. There have been no issues which have needed referral to child protection services since the last inspection.

Systems are in place for checking all health and safety matters. Appropriate fire safety checks are routinely applied and fire drills ensure that young people and adults know what to do in the event that the building has to be evacuated because of an emergency.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The manager has worked hard to establish stability and consistency in the team. Her efforts have been appreciated by the young people and members of staff. 'It's more homely now, she does what she says, you can trust her,' a young person said.

At the time of the last full inspection in September 2017, the dynamics in the home had been turbulent. Young people were living in an unsettled home with high levels of disruption. The manager and the responsible individual acknowledged the concerns and reduced the number of children living in the home, so that a more positive culture could be embedded. This has been achieved.

Members of staff report being very well supported. They all receive regular supervision, which gives them an opportunity to discuss their performance, how their work makes them feel and any training needs. The team meet on a four week basis with a clinical psychologist to explore how they are working with the young people and the challenges they present. As a result of this, members of staff feel that they are more consistent in

their care, and that the young people benefit from this and make progress. 'We're all in a better place, we've gelled together as a team now,' said one member of staff.

Feedback from external professionals regarding communication with the manager is very positive. They speak highly of the efforts that the staff team makes on behalf of the young people, especially when advocating on their behalf with other agencies, for example education settings. This sense of cooperation and the efforts made on behalf of the young people ensure that there is no complacency, and that there is a sustained drive to improve outcomes. The committed and genuine care offered helps young people to make progress and have opportunities to succeed.

While there is attentiveness shown in the way that the welfare and progress of the young people are promoted, this diligence is not always evident in some of the recording. Some risk assessments are lacking in detail and records of routine checks of young people's rooms are not kept up to date, as agreed in their care plans. These shortfalls have not had an impact on the young people's safety, but they do not evidence the sometimes considerable efforts that members of staff have made to support young people.

The interior of the home has been substantially refurbished since the last inspection, and now provides a comfortable and homely environment. This improved appearance is undermined by the presence of smoking detritus outside the back door. This is unsightly, and does not reflect the otherwise good standards of the decor and accommodation.

## **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 differences 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 whom 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:** SC042147

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Child First Limited

**Registered provider address:** c/o 40 Oxford Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN11 1UT

**Responsible individual:** Johanna Davys Havard

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Paul Taylor: social care inspector

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