

SC051947

Registered provider: After Care (NW) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private company owns the home. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for two young people who may have social and/or emotional difficulties.

The current manager was registered with Ofsted in January 2016.

Inspection dates: 1 to 2 November 2018

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be 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: 22 November 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/11/2017	Full	Good
05/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
04/05/2016	Full	Good
15/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(b)) This is specifically in relation to ensuring that the young person's impact risk assessment takes account of the local safer area report, to ensure that the area is safe for them.	24/12/2018
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i)) This is specifically in relation to ensuring that any known and emerging risks are identified.	24/12/2018
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(v)) In particular, ensure that conversations about the staff's safety	24/12/2018

are recorded in their supervision records and within staff team meetings when appropriate.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33(4)(b)) This is specifically in relation to the manager receiving regular supervision. Further to this, that consideration is given to receiving supervision from an independent person.	24/12/2018
A notification made under this regulation— must include details of— the matter; the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter; must be made or confirmed in writing. (Regulation 40(5)(a)(i)(iii)) This is specifically in relation to providing full details of all actions taken by safeguarding professionals.	24/12/2018

Recommendations

- Ensure that staff are 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)
This is specifically in relation to staff not amending records by scribbling out errors within recordings.
- Ensure that children are able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There are two young people currently living in this home. However, at the time of this inspection one young person was missing from home.

The manager makes sure that when young people come to live at the home she has all the essential documentation. She uses this information to assess whether the home can meet the young person's needs. The manager also ensures that the needs of the new

young person are compatible with those of the young person already living in the home. However, the manager has not used the safer area report to help inform an assessment as to whether the location of the home may pose any risks to young people.

Young people live in a caring, friendly and supportive home. Staff give the young people the help that they need to grow by being patient and understanding. As a result, the young people are making significant progress in all areas of their lives. A social worker said, 'I am blown away by the progress he has made.' Another social worker said, 'He had only been here for a short while, but I could see the progress he had made.'

The manager and staff work closely with a range of education professionals. One young person was attending a school some distance away from the home. A new school was found, and a good transition plan was established that included visits to the new school. As a result, the young person has settled well, has full attendance and has a day release to attend college to complete a construction course. The other young person has recently come to the home and does not yet have a nominated school placement. The manager has worked closely with the virtual head for education to find an appropriate school. In the interim, the young person is being tutored at the home and is supported by staff to complete educational activities. The manager makes sure that she has the young people's latest school reports and that meetings about young people's education take place in a timely fashion. This means that staff know what academic level each young person is working at and what support they may need, for example help with their homework.

Young people's care plans are regularly updated. Any changes are discussed with young people, as well as during staff meetings. Information is also shared with professionals, which means that everyone is aware of any changes and the support that the young people need on a daily basis. Young people share their views, wishes and feelings through regular key-worker conversations, house meetings and daily chats. A young person said, 'I am always asked my opinion and I feel that I can make decisions.'

Young people are in good health because staff act as any good parent would. For example, when a young person first came to live at the home he said that he had several allergies, colour blindness and numerous aches and pains that required visits to the doctors or the hospital. These were all checked with healthcare professionals and he was deemed to be in good health. The young person has received additional support with his emotional health and he is now settled at the home. Ongoing therapeutic input is helping him with reducing his anxiety levels.

Staff provide young people with suitable information about maintaining healthy lifestyles and encourage participation in physical activities. For example, one young person enjoys going to the gym. Staff encouraged him to try rugby and he now plays regularly in a team. The young person said, 'I really enjoy rugby, and I am hoping to go professional.' A member of staff said that the young person was 'really good', and that the team's trainer has said that the young person has the ability to become a professional rugby player.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

One young person spoke about how safe he feels in this home and that he had warm and trusting relationships with members of staff. He said that he was confident that he could approach any one of the staff and that they would listen to him or do what they could to help, including passing on any concerns to the appropriate people. Should there be a need to complain, young people usually receive a formal letter explaining the outcome of any complaint. However, on one occasion a young person did not agree with the outcome of his complaint. Although the manager said that the young person had verbally agreed the outcome, there was no record of this conversation to evidence this.

Young people who go missing are protected in line with agreed protocols. Records show that staff attempt to maintain phone contact with those young people who are unsupervised in the community and that staff make every effort to look for them if they fail to return home. Return interviews are completed by an independent person and staff discuss safety concerns with the young person. Due to this good practice, one young person has significantly reduced his episodes of being reported missing to the police.

However, one young person has been missing for over three weeks. Safeguarding professionals, the young person's social worker and the police have commended the staff for their diligence, collaborative working, and for providing intelligence in an attempt to secure the young person's safe return to the home. A social worker said, 'We go out together visiting family members to try and gain information. I could not ask for anything more from them.' A safeguarding professional said, 'The way they have worked with the family is exceptional. I have never dealt with this company before and they are excellent. They are very responsive and informed. Some placements expect the police to do it all, but not at this home. They are extremely proactive.' Due to this very effective joint working, steps are being taken to apply to the courts for a recovery order.

The manager usually notifies Ofsted, social workers and professionals when a serious incident occurs. However, on one occasion the information provided did not contain pertinent information. Notably, that the police had issued a press release through the local newspaper after a young person had been missing for a period of time. This information was not shared with Ofsted. This meant that Ofsted did not have all of the relevant information to assist in making a judgement about the steps that the manager was taking and what, if any, action Ofsted may have needed to take.

In the main, young people's risk assessments provide sufficient information so that staff have a clear understanding of the young people's vulnerabilities. Sound strategies guide staff to support young people in a safe way. However, the rationale for identifying risks is not always clear. For example, the impact and risk associated with a young person having had a history of knife crime before being placed at the home has not been sufficiently assessed. In contrast to this, the manager has risk assessed the likelihood of a young person making allegations against staff when there is no actual known history of this. This does not show that the current approach to assessing risk is sufficiently thorough and is reflective of actual relevant risk factors.

Generally, young people's behaviour in the home is good. Incentive and reward schemes help young people to make positive choices. For example, one young person received a sky diving experience for achievements in education. However, there have been two occasions when a young person has taken the company's car keys and has tried to drive the car. On one occasion, a member of staff put himself in danger and stood in front of

the vehicle to stop the young person driving off. The manager said that the importance of securing car keys and the safety of members of staff was discussed in a staff meeting and with individual staff members in supervision. However, records did not show this and, consequently, this does not demonstrate that effective action was taken to address these issues to avoid further occurrences.

Physical intervention is rarely used, and only ever to keep a young person safe from harm. Records show that members of staff revisit the incident with the young person. This gives young people and staff the opportunity to discuss what happened and how it can be avoided in the future. This approach also allows members of staff to reflect on their practice and it means that young people's views are fully considered and respected.

Safe recruitment and health and safety practices at the home mean that only suitable staff work with young people and that the home is a safe place to live. A range of safeguarding training provides members of staff with the skills and knowledge to look after young people well and to care for them safely.

The shortfalls raised are mainly recording issues that, to date, have not adversely affected young people's safety or their care. However, if not addressed they have the potential to do so.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

An experienced manager manages the home. She has one unit to complete and submit in order to gain her management qualification. The manager and deputy manager divide areas of responsibility to make sure that there is good oversight of the home's records, managerial tasks and support to the young people and staff.

Young people's files are in good order. The young people's records show the action that staff have taken to support young people to progress. However, when staff make a recording error, they scribble the information out. This does not ensure that all records are legible.

Good levels of staffing mean that young people's needs are well met. The home currently has one waking night staff vacancy. A recent recruitment drive did not identify a suitable applicant. Therefore, the position has been re-advertised. In the interim, arrangements have been made to cover these hours so that young people receive consistency of care from staff who know them well.

Staff said that there is an open environment where their views and opinions matter. Staff receive regular supervision that they say is useful because they can discuss their practice and any developmental needs. However, the manager has not received regular and formal supervision for a significant amount of time. Further to this, her supervision is completed by a director of the company who is a family member. This does not ensure that her practice is evaluated or that she receives impartial supervision from an independent person.

Half of the staff team hold a relevant childcare qualification. Other staff are at different stages of completion. New staff complete a probationary period and are enrolled on the level 3 diploma course after their induction. The new staff receive a high level of

supervision and have regular development opportunities to make sure that their practice is good. In addition to this, all staff complete mandatory training during their induction and probationary period. This training is refreshed regularly. Staff continue to broaden their knowledge through completing other training, such as data protection, county lines and criminal and sexual exploitation.

Monitoring and review systems in the home help the manager to show the strengths and weaknesses of the home and the staff team. Action is taken quickly to rectify shortfalls and to celebrate strengths. As part of this monitoring, there is consultation with young people, professionals, staff and stakeholders so that an all-round view is collated about the care provided at the home.

The manager has addressed the requirement and recommendations that were made at the last inspection. For example, young people now have storage space to keep their personal belongings and possessions in; the young people receive restraint debriefs from independent people who have not been involved in the restraint; and new staff receive training in the home's therapeutic model.

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: SC051947

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: After Care (NW) Limited

Registered provider address: 45 Kensington Road, Southport, Merseyside PR9 0RT

Responsible individual: Timothy Blundell

Registered manager: Rosie Binfield

Inspector

Pam Nuckley, social care regulatory inspector

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