

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	16/01/2017
Unique reference number	SC061678
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Care Assist Children's Services Limited
Registered provider address	1 High Barn, Back Lane, Aughton, Ormskirk, Lancashire L39 6SX

Responsible individual	Peter Jones
Registered manager	Edward Adams
Inspector	Michelle Edge

Inspection date	16/01/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection. This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. Since the last inspection, the registered manager has taken effective action to address the previous recommendations. A new children's guide has been devised and a computer has been made available to all young people, to promote their education and learning. Furthermore, there has been an improvement in the evaluation and monitoring of incidents of going missing from care and the details are now contained within the quality of care monitoring report, compiled by the registered manager. Young people enjoy a stable and settled home environment. Prior to any young person moving in or out of the home, managers have continued to complete detailed compatibility risk assessments and transition plans. The individual needs of each young person forms part of the assessment and careful consideration is given to the compatibility of the group. One young person who had recently lived at the home, before successfully returning to live with his family, recorded, 'I thank everybody here for the best time of my life in such a short period of time. I will most definitely keep in touch and I hope to visit in the near future.' While another young person, who still lives at the home, said, 'I have been living here for three years. It is the best place I have ever lived and it feels like home. The staff listen to you when no one else does.' Young people benefit from receiving good and positive care from a consistent and committed staff team. The staff have established structured care routines that young people respond to well. Staff manage behaviour through good, clear communication, which includes negotiation, compromise and flexibility. This has resulted in no punitive behaviour management, such as physical interventions and sanctions, since the last inspection. This results in a home where praise is fundamental and consequences are rare. A social worker told the inspector, '[name of young person] has only been there a short time, but he has responded well to the staff, even answering his phone when out in the community to let them know	

he is safe. That's the first time he has done that.'

Young people receive support from staff who demonstrate a good knowledge of safeguarding and who are experienced in managing high-risk behaviours, such as going missing from home. When young people go missing from home, staff try to maintain contact with them, as well as actively looking for them. They also continue to work closely with all safeguarding professionals, providing regular updates and information as required. In addition, staff complete direct work with young people to increase their level of understanding of the risks that they are placing themselves at while in the community. This shows young people that staff genuinely care about their welfare and safety. This in turn helps to promote trusting relationships.

Some young people have continued to make good progress in their education and staff continue to promote education and learning on a daily basis. The home now has a computer in place for young people to enable them to complete research projects and any additional learning that is required. However, not all young people have an education placement. When young people are new to the home, staff have challenged the placing local authorities when there is a delay in an education provision being provided. One social worker said, 'They have emailed me and rang me to continually stress how important it is that a suitable placement is found.' When young people are not in education or refuse to attend, staff maintain structured routines. This ensures that young people are ready to return to their school or educational environment.

Good teamwork supports young people's progress. Staff members are mutually respectful of each other, they communicate well and share ideas and views. One staff member said, 'It's a really good team. I am never afraid to ask if I am not sure and someone will always help.' The use of bank or agency staffing is rare as established staff members volunteer to work additional shifts. Staff recognise that young people do not cope as well when new staff care for them. Consequently, they will work extra shifts to prevent destabilising the young people's progress and contentment. Furthermore, staff attend regular team meetings and benefit from professional supervision, which takes place regularly. However, not all staff have been registered to complete their diploma in childcare, despite working in the home for over two years. The provider accepted this is an area of improvement and had contacted a local training provider to progress this, but had not followed up the continued delays.

Although the staff team works hard to create a warm, nurturing environment, there

is work that needs to be complete within the home to improve the general environment. The couches are stained and paintwork throughout the home is chipped and needs updating. There is also a discarded car in the driveway, which is not roadworthy and waiting to be removed. These are areas for improvement and the manager had identified them within his development plan.

The registered manager regularly monitors all of the records kept by the home to ensure compliance with the home's policies and that they are in line with regulations. He is aware of the strengths of the home and has identified areas for development, including the quality of recording and improving the environment for young people. Monitoring by the manager provides insight into what is going well, but does not always identify shortfalls, such as conflicting information in records or staff failing to sign and date documents when they make changes. Furthermore, on two separate occasions, notifications have not been provided to HMCI in a timely way. A more robust system of monitoring is needed to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

Information about this children's home

This is a private children's home. It provides care and accommodation for three young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/04/2016	Full	Good
30/09/2015	Full	Good
11/08/2015	Full	Inadequate
17/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must: (2)(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	20/02/2017
36: Children's case records The registered person must 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)(c))	20/02/2017

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that all staff in a care role, including external agency or bank staff, have the qualification in Regulation 32 (4) within the relevant timescale listed in Regulation 32 (5). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.12)
- Ensure that the registered person notifies Ofsted and other persons if one of the situations specified in Regulation 40 (4)(a)–(d) occurs, or if there is an incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home which the registered person considers to be serious Regulation (40) (4)(e). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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