

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC061678
Inspector	Marian Denny
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Care Assist Children's Services Limited
Registered person address	PO Box 261 Ormskirk L39 6WU

Responsible individual	Peter Roderick Jones
Registered manager	Edward Adams
Date of last inspection	17/01/2014

Inspection date	29/08/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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This is a good home. Young people make good progress in a safe, nurturing and child-centred environment. Improved outcomes are seen in education, emotional resilience and in the reduction of risk taking behaviours. Young people increasingly improve their school attendance and are making good educational progress. They are genuinely happy and enthusiastic about their personal progress.

Young people's care is personalised, well planned, clearly taking into account their individual needs. Placement plans clearly portray young people's needs and the services required to suitably meet them. Young people's views are listened to and acted upon in all aspects of their care at the home. They are supported by a highly committed staff team who offer good guidance to enable young people to make positive and productive change in their lives. Young people enjoy good relationships with staff, trust them and as a result, increasingly listen to the advice and guidance provided. They are happy in the home and positive about the care they receive.

The home is efficiently and effectively managed. This is underpinned by committed, dedicated and effective staff who provide a good safe, caring and nurturing environment for young people. They have high aspirations for young people and make every effort to provide opportunities for them to succeed. They also work well with other agencies to promote positive outcomes for young people. There is a

committed approach to enable young people to develop socially, physically and emotionally in relation to their starting points on entering the home. This has contributed to young people making significant progress since being at the home.

Staff's knowledge of young people's risks and vulnerabilities is underpinned by good safeguarding systems and procedures. They demonstrate a good understanding of safe working practice. Young people feel safe and are protected by good safeguarding practice within the home. Staff are skilled at helping young people to reduce their risk taking behaviour. Both the internal and external monitoring of the home is taking place regularly. Reports appropriately review performance and identify areas for improvement. Young people contribute to monitoring and can discuss their views; however, the Regulation 33 report does not contain the views of parents or relatives about the standard of care provided at the home. The management team is fully aware of the strengths and areas for development of the service and continuously strive to improve.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is one of four owned and managed by a limited company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/01/2014	Interim	good progress
21/05/2013	Full	good
21/01/2013	Interim	good progress
20/07/2012	Full	good

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

Recommendations

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

- ensure the analysis and evaluation in the Regulation 33 reports includes the views of others such as parents and relatives. (NMS 21)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people benefit from a secure and stable placement where they are able to develop and grow. Several young people have only been admitted to the home relatively recently. However, despite this they have already begun to develop relationships with staff in the home and with each other. One professional said, '(name of young person) is doing much better here and is developing relationships and making friends with others in the home'.

The majority of young people are also making significant and continuous improvement in their education, health, emotional development and in some cases their behaviour. It is clear that the relationships developed with staff have enabled them to feel secure enough to talk about their situations, their worries and to express their wishes in constructive ways. This includes the ability for some young people to talk through their problems reasonably, to negotiate and find acceptable solutions to them. Increasingly, some young people are making positive choices in their lives and reducing their risk taking behaviour. They are showing a willingness to learn from their experiences and mistakes, and accept guidance and advice from the adults caring for them. They are also increasingly showing maturity and emotional resilience in dealing with the challenges in their lives.

Young people of school age have good attendance levels and are making good progress, given their starting points. Young people who are post 16 are also engaged in education and have very positive aspirations for their future, as have all the young people living in this home. They are also developing independent living skills, appropriate to their age and ability as preparation for moving into adulthood.

Young people enjoy good health and are all registered with the relevant health professionals and services. They all enjoy healthy diets and lifestyles, involving themselves in plenty of physical exercise such as walking, playing football, cricket, golf, snooker, go-karting and going to the gym and fishing. They are also increasingly developing a good understanding about the importance of healthy lifestyles and key health risks. Overall they are making positive health choices that improve their own health and are increasingly taking more responsibility for their own health needs. For example, they are increasingly keeping health appointments.

Young people engage in a variety of activities in the home and local community, such as the activities highlighted above. The enjoyment and stimulation derived from these activities, increases their confidence, self-esteem and broadens their horizons.

Young people receive individualised care and support which addresses their specific cultural and heritage needs and promotes their identity. This individualised care and support also ensures that they grow in confidence and develop to their true potential. Staff also ensure they develop their independence skills and they are involved in the

daily running of the home, including, menu planning, cooking, cleaning and activity planning. They also participate in young people's meetings and are regularly consulted on the running of the home. These practices enable young people to have control over their own daily lives and to contribute to the development of the home.

Young people benefit from planned and supported contact with family and friends. Detailed placement plans ensure contact only takes place with whom it has been agreed and this is regularly reviewed. Likewise, Staff develop effective relationships with family members and involve them, where appropriate, in the overall planning of young people's care. This ensures young people maintain strong links and enjoy contact with their family.

Quality of care

outstanding

Young people are receiving an outstanding quality of care from a committed and dedicated staff team, who do their best to help young people achieve their potential. Staff have high aspirations for young people, as evidenced in the opportunities afforded them, the encouragement given them and the progress they make. Social workers recognise the high standards in place and say, 'The care provided is excellent'. 'Staff have bent over backwards to meet their needs'. 'I am overwhelmed by the support staff have given (names of young people)'.

Placement plans are very well written and sensitive to the individual needs of young people. The home works extremely well in its partnership with external services to ensure young people receive the appropriate professional support. This enables young people to really understand their lives and to begin making positive changes. Placement plans are consistently reviewed by young people and their keyworker. This enables young people's views and opinions to be obtained regarding the care they receive at the home. Young people say: 'I am happy here and I want to stay until I am 18'. 'Similarly, staff say, 'We want the very best for young people living in this home and we want them to achieve as much as possible'.

Young people are also encouraged to attend and contribute to their looked after children review. This enables them to have an input into the care planning process and the formulation of their future care plan. One professional said, '(name of young person) came to the review and he was the very best that he has ever been in this meeting. There was a marked change in his attitude and behaviour and this is thanks to the work of the staff in the home'.

Consultation and on-going communication is integral to constructive relationships between staff and young people. Relationships are based on mutual respect. There are clear mechanisms to secure feedback from young people and as a result young people influence the running of the home.

Young people identify their key workers as people who are extremely important to

them. Regular key worker sessions enable young people to express themselves and reflect on areas of difficulty or progress. One young person said, 'I am really being helped by my worker and am beginning to sort out things'. Young people flourish as a result of the care they receive. This is clearly illustrated by the comments made by several professionals, who said, 'he is happier here, more settled and the care provided is brilliant'. Another professional talking about another young person said, 'He has improved a lot, particularly in relation to his attitude and behaviour'.

Young people benefit from plans that clearly identify individual heritage, identity, sexuality and faith. They are actively encouraged to pursue their individual beliefs and are fully supported in this. For example, in attending appropriate religious centres and accessing religious material. Young people are also encouraged to respect each other's individual heritage and beliefs. This enables young people to gain an understanding of our multi-cultural society and to celebrate difference in their lives.

Staff are excellent advocates for young people in terms of health and education. Carefully selected schools and individual education plans ensure the needs of each young person living at the home are met. Effective communication between home and school means any difficulties are resolved quickly and young people move forward. Education is a high priority for staff and young people are aware of what is expected of them and they engage well with school. Staff will also respectfully challenge decisions in order to get the best for young people. Professionals respect this and staff's tenacity ensures young people access appropriate support to meet their needs.

Young people live in a spacious, well maintained home that blends into the residential area. The atmosphere is very warm, welcoming, relaxed and calm. Young people have their own rooms that are personalised and they very much feel at home. Photographs and mementos on display reflect young people's positive experiences and celebrate their achievements.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Staff are appropriately trained in order to respond to suspicions or allegations of abuse. Good partnership working with external agencies ensures the most appropriate action is taken to safeguard young people. Risk assessments are also clear and focused and regularly reviewed with young people in order to minimise risk factors in their lives. As a result, young people are afforded the opportunity to understand their own vulnerabilities and where risks have reduced or escalated. Young people say 'Staff really respect and care about you. They have really helped me to work on my behaviour and I have got a certificate from school, the first in five years.'

The staff support a zero tolerance approach to bullying in the home. Young people

are provided with good information and guidance to ensure their safety is maintained at all times. Young people feel confident that should a concern arise, staff will respond quickly and effectively. Young people confirm that bullying does not take place in the home and if the issue were to arise they feel satisfied that this would be managed appropriately and in their best interest.

Young people live in a home where their safety and well-being is protected. Detailed individual missing from home plans are in place and records demonstrate the correct procedures and strategies are implemented without delay. External agencies work well with staff and young people to ensure a consistent approach is maintained should a young person go missing from home. Records held in the home provide good evidence that the frequency of young people going missing has significantly reduced.

Young people know what standards of behaviour are expected and the possible consequences of poor behaviour. Staff are positive role models for the young people and are very good at encouraging positive behaviour by providing high levels of praise and encouragement. Consequently, sanctions are rarely used as young people are able to consider their own behaviours and the impact these have on others.

Staff promote young people's on-going protection by undertaking regular fire drills and service tests making sure that all faults are efficiently addressed. Clear evidence highlights stringent monitoring of all systems within the home including the appropriate storage and administration of medication.

Recruitment and selection of staff is thorough. This ensures young people are only looked after by staff, who are appropriately checked and suitable to work in the home.

Leadership and management

good

The organisation appointed the manager of this home in January 2014. Prior to this he was the deputy manager. He was registered with Ofsted in June 2014. He is suitably experienced and qualified to carry out his responsibilities. He has over 12 years' experience in the residential care field and has worked in children's homes for children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. He has achieved the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 4 in health and social care for children and young people. He is currently applying to undertake the level 5 in management, which will shortly commence. He demonstrates a real commitment to his continued professional development and very much wishes to improve his knowledge and skills through training.

This is the first inspection of this service since the manager's registration with Ofsted. At the time of the last interim inspection the home had made good progress and a judgement was made to this effect. No requirements or recommendations were

made. This was as a direct result of the robust internal and external monitoring systems in place. However, in this inspection the external monitoring report, that is the Regulation 33 report, did not contain the views of parents or relatives about the standard of care provided at the home.

This home is efficiently and effectively managed. Staff benefit from the expertise of a Registered Manager who is child focussed and well experienced in residential care. He is keen to keep abreast of current research in the residential field and to impart any learning from this, so staff can incorporate this in the home's practice. He is reflective in his learning and practice and makes appropriate positive changes to systems, documents and the home's practice. This ensures continuous improvements to the services provided.

The home has good deputising arrangements in place. The manager and deputy have complementary skills and work very well together. The managerial team has established good working relationships with external agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of all the children and young people. New staff are actively supported in their work, with ongoing support and supervision to ensure their continued personal development.

The management team are clear about the many strengths of their service and can demonstrate the very positive impact living at this home has on each child and young person. They also ensure that the home is always well staffed to safeguard and promote their welfare and to meet their unique needs and personal preferences. Consequently, children and young people are well cared for by a stable, suitably qualified, experienced and competent staff team who confirm good support and supervision.

The staff team are suitably qualified and have a range of skills to meet the young people's needs. The number of staff on duty are sufficient to meet young people needs in the best possible way. This includes the support they need for education and activities, visits to their families and attending appointments. Staff receive good training to enhance their knowledge, individual skills and professional development. Staff are effectively supported and guided through suitable professional supervision. Team meetings take place regularly. This allows the staff team to discuss the running of the home, to look at ways to improve the service they offer, to reflect on young people's progress and on how best to support them. Staff are positive about the home. They feel it is a good environment to work in and the manager is accessible and supportive. One professional stated, 'it is well managed and staff go the extra mile to help the children and young people in any way they can'.

The home has a development plan in place in order to support the continuous improvement in the home. It is very much a work in progress and further work is planned to develop the plan.

Children and young people's written records are securely stored and well maintained.

They are of a generally good standard and provide a clear picture of young people's progress and experiences. The records provide a narrative for young people's daily lives, observations about young people's moods and behaviours and an analysis of their progress in achieving positive outcomes.

The statement of purpose is up-to-date and accurately reflects the current aims, policies, practices and staffing of the home. Children and young people are given a user friendly and meaningful children's guide so they understand the services provided and the expectations on their behaviour.

Notifiable events are forwarded to Ofsted in a timely manner. They demonstrate that appropriate action is taken to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people in full collaboration with other relevant agencies.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.