

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	30/09/2015
Unique reference number	SC061678
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Care Assist Children's Services Limited
Registered person address	1 High Barn, Back Lane, Aughton, ORMSKIRK, Lancashire, L39 6SX

Responsible individual	Peter Jones
Registered manager	Edward Adams
Inspector	Michelle Edge

Inspection date	30/09/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Inadequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	Four Compliance notices were issued. A full inspection was conducted on 30 September 2015; Ofsted found the registered provider had taken action to meet the regulatory shortfalls.
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

SC061678

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people's needs are now being consistently met. In particular their safety, emotional well-being and education needs are clearly set out and there is increased engagement in plans.
- Relationships between staff and young people have improved through sharing activities that are tailored to individual tastes and preferences, and recognise young people's unique needs.
- Young people engage in their education placements, supported by staff who recognise their efforts and achievements.
- Placing authorities confirm the home is having a positive impact on the lives of young people.
- Managers have helped staff to reflect on their learning and practice, and have supported a more open culture within the home.
- Leaders and managers now have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. A clear development plan has been formulated to ensure that improvements are fully embedded into practice and sustained.
- Work has been undertaken to address all of the requirements made at the last inspection, this needs to be built upon and sustained to continually promote better outcomes for all young people.
- Independent visits are not always effective as they do not provide an up-to-date account of safeguarding or welfare concerns. They also provide contradictory information.

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

Recommendations

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

- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. Those undertaking the role should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. In particular, if the information provided is inaccurate this will need to be challenged and amended. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 55, paragraph 24)

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
11/08/2015	Full	Inadequate
17/03/2015	Interim	sustained effectiveness
29/08/2014	Full	Good
17/01/2014	Interim	Good Progress

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Four young people have remained living in the home and all have made progress in their safety and emotional well-being. Staff have worked hard to address issues around stability and life experiences, for each young person. Consequently, young people appear happier and can see the changes that have taken place since the last inspection and how this has impacted on them. For example, young people were all provided with mobile phones so staff can keep in contact with them when they are out of the home. This has increased their safety. Although some young people found the regular phone calls 'More annoying ', they understood that staff wanted to check they were safe. Young people had also been taking part in more activities with different members of the staff team. This has enabled them, to develop positive and trusting relationships with different adults caring for them. They also thoroughly enjoyed a day out Go Karting with the whole staff team. This included all young people; the manager and both full time and bank staff. This has strengthened relationships. In turn, this has enabled staff to build increased levels of trust with young people. One young person said 'I feel a bit happier living her. The day trip was great and it was good to see everyone laughing. I also feel that staff will now listen to me and come to my bedroom and check I'm ok, when I stay in there for a few hours'. Another young person said ' now the staff have completed all there paperwork, they are spending time with us and we are going out and about, I like it here and I'm staying till I'm 18'. Some young people are making good progress with their education placements. One young man has successfully been supported to enrol on a full time course at college, to further his aspirations for his future as a children's homes manager. Although there are on-going difficulties in establishing a suitable placement for	

another young person, the staff have taken a more pro-active approach. They have been consulting with the virtual head and social worker, raising concerns around the on-going delays with education and highlighting the detrimental effect to the young person's life chances. Staff now have copies of young people's educational statements and a clear understanding of their individual needs. This has enabled them to effectively challenge the Local Authority when inappropriate education placements are being considered. Staff understand the importance of education and are now fully supporting young people in this area. This was identified within the compliance notice and all areas have now been met.

Staff have continued to develop and improve young people's health plans. These now contain all relevant information. When issues are identified around health concerns these are now followed up and clear outcomes evidenced. For example, referrals had been progressed with young people to access advice from the drugs and alcohol team. This has ensured that they are provided with appropriate support, advice and guidance when using cannabis. This helps promote young people's health and well-being and ensures they have adequate information about the risks they are putting themselves and understand how to access support.

Young person's records are now up to date and Local Authority documentation has been received. Placement plans, risk assessments and behaviour management plans have all been updated and contain all relevant information. These evidence young people's individual needs and identify any vulnerability. There are also clear action plans and how staff will meet young people's needs. They are now regularly reviewed and signed by all staff to make sure everyone is aware of any changes. This ensures that young people's needs are being met and a consistent approach is used by a competent staff team.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Young people now benefit from detailed risk managements plans to ensure all matters related to their welfare and safety are understood by staff and managed effectively. Staff have a clearer understanding of young people's needs, and are taking a more pro-active approach to help them to engage in the support available	

to them. They are now working effectively with the police, social workers and missing from care professionals, to help them to stay safe.

Risk management plans have been re-designed in consultation with the all staff. They now clearly show the progress young people are making in reducing risks and are updated to include immediate changes in approach. For example, if there are new triggers identified these are added by the staff on duty and not left till the keyworker is available. This ensures that staff are all identifying new risks and updating records accordingly. One staff member said ' Since the last inspection I have been more involved and now have a clear understanding on the importance of paperwork and why it needs to be up to date. I have also had the opportunity to update this myself, which I found very helpful'.

Missing from care policies and procedures have been update and provide staff with a good guidance on what needs to happen if young people's whereabouts are unknown. Staff use a more hands on approach and will check the local area and speak to family and friends, if they are unable to locate the young person. Missing from care meetings are requested and when they do not take place evidence provided showed the action the staff have taken. This included sending emails in regards to the Local Authorities responsibility in organising this, in accordance with their own safeguarding policies.

When young people return after missing from care episodes, they are offered return home interviews by an independent person. These are used as an opportunity to learn, helping reduce risks and ensuring the safety of young people. For example, following an interview staff were able to talk to the young person about appropriate friendships as this was an issue he had highlighted. They have also spoken about peer pressure. Staff were able to provide him with different strategies he could use if similar situations arise.

Effective action has been taken to reduce incidents of bullying within the home. Staff have spent time with the young people in both a group and individually sessions discussing the affect bullying can have other people. They have also explained how comments can be interpreted differently. Positive activities have been organised as a group and low key monitoring has taken place. This has helped reduce the number of incidents and has enabled positive relationships within the group to be formed. One young person said 'I will now talk to staff if I am not happy. They will now listen and help me sort it out'. This had made him feel safer and happier. Practice now promotes the safety and welfare of young people and makes sure they effectively safeguarded.

Behaviour management plans have been updated and discussions have taken place with staff in team meetings around appropriate responses following any incidents. This has included a review of all consequences imposed on young people. This ensures a consistent approach is used that is not punitive but more effective. The manager has a clear overview of all consequences and young people are also provided with an opportunity to share their views on what has happened. For example one young person had recorded 'Its fair', when his money was restricted for one day, after he had been smoking in his bedroom.

Since the last inspection staff have attended training on child sexual exploitation (CSE), first aid, medication, restraint and safeguarding. Staff said 'Although it has been a difficult few weeks, the training has really helped and we now have a clear understanding of what we need to be aware of in regards to CSE. It's also good to learn more and has definitely made me more confident in my job'.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
Leaders and managers have worked effectively to devise a comprehensive action plan. This has been implemented to address all of the shortfalls found at the last inspection. Consequently recording in the home is much improved, providing a clearer and more up-to-date picture of young people's lives. This is particularly evident in young people's daily observation record; their behaviour management plans and individual risk assessments. Ongoing monitoring is in place to ensure they are regularly reviewed and updated to provide a good insight into young people's lives. The manager and assistant manager have now attended supervision training. This ensures that staff receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately trained and experienced professional. The manager has also enrolled on his diploma level 5, to further develop his professional practice. Managers have reviewed and updated the statement of purpose. This is now in line with The Children's Homes Regulations 2015 and provides a clear ethos for the home. Staff are fully aware of its content and young people are cared for in line with current legislation. Managers have also revised pre-admission procedures, to	

ensure all risk assessments are completed prior to young people being offered places. As there have been no admissions to the home, it is not possible to judge the effectiveness of this improvement

The home is able to demonstrate improved practice in the notification of serious events to Ofsted. This enables the regulator to monitor any action taken to promote the welfare and safety of all young people.

Regular monthly monitoring is undertaken by an independent visitor to improve the quality of care. However, the report compiled is not effective as it does not provide an up-to-date account of safeguarding or welfare concerns. Reports also contain contradictory information and are not helpful to the manager in monitoring the home. These are currently being reviewed.

Staff say that they are improving their knowledge and understanding of the needs of young people by attending training and working together more consistently as a team. Team meetings have been improved with actions plans devised to ensure accountability. Staff said 'the manager is very supportive and although we have been through a very difficult time, we can already see the improvements that have been made and more importantly the impact on young people'.

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 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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