

SC061795

Registered provider: Southern Adolescent Care Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is one of three children's homes operated by a private company. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation, on a planned or emergency basis, for up to six young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The home is supported by an education team and qualified therapists. The therapists provide a range of services to young people as a group and, when needed, to individuals.

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 September 2017

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 28 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- Individual care and support result in young people having very positive experiences and making excellent progress, which the young people can see.
- Young people's educational needs are identified, monitored and met with great care and attention.
- The staff, collectively and individually, focus on providing young people with the best care possible.
- Young people's views are highly valued and are acted on appropriately.
- Promoting good behaviour and decreasing poor behaviour is a central part of everyday practice.
- The leadership and oversight of the home are strong and effective.
- Staff are excellent advocates for young people.
- Strong relationships are cultivated and maintained with professionals and with young people's family and friends.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Medication records do not always note each time a young person refuses a prescribed medication.
- Individual risk activity assessments are not always evident.
- Records do not clearly state the level of training that staff have received regarding an important aspect of young people's needs.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
25/10/2016	Full	Good
26/01/2016	Full	Good
14/07/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Recommendations

- Care must be taken to ensure prescribed medicines are only administered to the individual for whom they are prescribed. Medicines must be administered in line with a medically approved protocol. Records must be kept of the administration of all medication, which includes occasions when prescribed medication is refused. Regulation 23 requires the registered person to ensure that they make suitable arrangements to manage, administer and dispose of any medication. These are fundamentally the same sorts of arrangements as a good parent would make but are subject to additional safeguards. Where the home has questions or concerns about a child's medication, they should approach an expert such as a General Medical Practitioner, community pharmacist or designated nurse for looked-after children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)
In particular, the registered provider should ensure that, if a young person refuses to take a prescribed medication, staff always record this information.
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day to day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
In particular, the registered person should ensure that when an activity is deemed to require an individual risk assessment, such an assessment is undertaken.
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs, and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
In particular, the registered person should review whether all the staff have adequate training regarding harmful sexual behaviours.
- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
In particular, the registered person should ensure that the supervision policy confirms who can legitimately see supervision records and that this group can access these records at all times.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people make excellent progress because the staff build strong and supportive relationships with each of them. These relationships help young people to progress and enable them to recognise the progress that they make. Young people all gave the home 10 out of 10, and they said that this was mainly due to the genuine care that staff take when looking after them. One young person said, 'Staff help all young people and take care of them well.'

Sensitive support enables young people to move into the home successfully. The staff think about the individual circumstances of each young person, their views and their needs. They effectively plan, monitor and review initial programmes of support, and this results in young people feeling valued and that their views are heard. The first month of each young person's placement is seen as an important time for both the staff and young person to consider whether this is the right place for them to live. This careful approach to the admission and settling in phase helps young people to settle in well and to quickly build a rapport with the staff.

Young people's views are heard, valued and acted on. Young people are helped to express their views whether or not they are contrary to the wishes and views of others. Young people are encouraged to say what they think in every situation. This is often used positively as an opportunity for young people to see things differently, and to understand any reasons why their wishes cannot be granted. When their requests cannot be met, the staff look for different ways to meet young people half way. This enables young people to remain involved in decisions about their care, and helps them to retain some control over the decisions that are made about them.

Education is promoted extremely effectively. The support that the staff provide ensures that young people's needs are assessed appropriately, that good decisions are made about school placements, and that young people make excellent educational progress.

The organisation works well with both the local authority and educational placements, providing them with help and assistance where necessary, and working with them to agree how they can all work together to meet young people's educational needs. The organisation provides an educational service to each young person, which monitors effectively that their educational needs are met, assists in finding placements and provides additional tutoring when necessary. One headteacher said that the home's staff had provided him with a very accurate account of a young person's needs which enabled his staff team to prepare effectively for the young person's arrival at school.

If young people are not in education, staff make every effort to ensure that this happens as quickly as possible. In the interim, the staff team and a dedicated educational worker

ensure that young people benefit from an educational programme all week. Staff assist young people to develop positive daily routines to help them to be ready for school when a placement is found.

Staff establish and maintain appropriate relationships with young people's families. The staff advocate for changes in the time that young people spend with their friends and families when they consider that this would be beneficial, particularly when a young person has expressed a view about this. In one instance, this has improved a young person's relationship with the staff, and, in another, it has supported the family to maintain positive contact during a difficult situation. This is a real area of strength.

Young people's individuality is celebrated and supported extremely well. Staff are skilled in identifying each young person's particular needs and preferences as well as understanding how to support them. For example, one young person valued how the staff took care of him when he found it difficult to sleep. Young people are also encouraged to explore their identities and grow into the person they want to be.

Activities form a major focus of the support offered. The diverse programme links well to young people's preferences. It is also designed to expand their range of experiences, enabling young people to try new things and find new interests. The staff choose activities which enable them to spend meaningful time with young people, both individually and as a group. This helps young people to develop a sense of belonging. It increases their rapport with the other young people they live with and with the staff who care for them.

Young people are healthy, and their health improves. Any health needs are promptly and effectively met. Young people are discouraged from smoking, and they are given access to help them to stop. Excellent links with relevant health professionals support the staff, who regularly seek advice when appropriate. Although young people take little medication, the records do not always record when a young person refuses prescribed medication.

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

Young people are helped to keep safe by staff who act appropriately when safeguarding concerns arise. The staff work well with other agencies to keep young people safe, and they challenge partner agencies if they consider that issues have not been followed up appropriately.

The staff know and confidently implement suitable safeguarding policies and procedures. They have a good understanding of issues such as child sexual exploitation and radicalisation, and they keep their knowledge up to date through regular training and discussions at team meetings. Safeguarding concerns are recorded well. The entries clearly explain the actions that have been taken to protect young people and how any concern has been managed and concluded.

Behaviour management is central to how the staff work with young people and is effective in supporting young people to develop better behaviours. It is firmly rooted in the staff working to improve young people's good behaviour and recognising what they do well. The manager said that she asks the staff to 'catch children doing something good'.

The reward systems are clear, and they support young people to know what is expected and how to behave well. Young people help to devise their goals, and they know how well they are meeting them. The staff organise regular one-to-one sessions to support young people to make good progress. All the staff work together effectively to help young people to achieve their goals. They are mindful about how they can influence a young person's ability to achieve their ambitions, both as a group and individually. This well-coordinated approach to behaviour management helps young people to engage in better behaviours and to reflect for themselves on what this means. The approach results in positive changes which young people recognise in themselves. For example, one young person has identified that they need help with managing their anger, and the right support is being sought for them.

Management of poor behaviour is thoughtful and sensitive. Sanctions are appropriate, and young people said that these are fair. One young person said, 'They [sanctions] were more than fair considering what I had done.' Another said that arguments are quickly dealt with and do not result in young people harbouring resentments towards each other.

Risk assessment is central to the everyday lives of young people. These assessments are written well and cover the necessary areas for each young person. The staff know the most important risks for each young person and keep these under constant review. They appropriately consider these risks when making major and minor decisions for individuals and for the group. This attention to detail supports the staff to keep young people safe and to monitor risks vigilantly when any new concerns arise. Staff appropriately carry out a wide range of assessments for activities undertaken by young people. These detail the actions that staff should take when a young person participates in an activity. In one case, an individual risk assessment for a young person was not formally recorded. The manager took immediate action to rectify this shortfall during the inspection.

How well the staff manage young people who go missing is variable. Recent work with young people had dramatically reduced how often young people went missing. One young person settled well then started to go missing more frequently. The staff are working to understand the root causes of this young person's behaviour and are attentively engaging with them to reduce the likelihood of future episodes of going missing.

Restraint is only used when this is necessary. One young person could demonstrate the holds that had been used; he confirmed that no one had been hurt and that restraint is not used unless needed.

Appropriate action is taken to ensure that young people are safe when using the

internet. The systems in place enable the staff to monitor internet use; when there are concerns, appropriate measures are put in place to reduce the risks. The staff also work well with all young people to learn about the risks that the internet poses, as well as its benefits.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders and managers demonstrate ambition for the home, based on a strong drive to improve young people's lives. The registered manager leads by example and provides both a good role model for working with young people, and a strong understanding of how to lead and manage the staff team so that each member of staff grows and develops in their ability to care for young people well. Good support from senior staff is in place across the organisation. They use their diverse skills effectively to support the staff to focus on young people and their needs.

Planning, reviewing and monitoring have improved immensely. These are extremely rigorous and result in extremely effective action which supports young people's progress to be monitored effectively and to develop a culture and environment which fully support the aims and objectives of the home.

The well-staffed team works together well to ensure that staff members provide consistent, well-thought-through care that focuses on the things that matter. Staff plan effectively so that eventualities, such as collecting young people who are missing, or supporting contact, are responded to well. Staff spend time with young people and act as a good parent would.

The staff are extremely well trained and inducted to the home. They demonstrate a clear understanding of their professional goals and what they do well. They feel able to ask for assistance from anyone in the organisation to help them to complete their training. A good training programme is in place, alongside excellent monitoring forms for induction. This supports staff to reflect on what they are learning. An open learning culture is evident. This provides a range of opportunities for the staff to develop. While the staff demonstrate a knowledge of safeguarding issues, including child sexual exploitation and radicalisation, they have not all received training in respect of harmful sexual behaviours.

Regular staff supervision focuses on how, individually and as a team, staff can continually improve how they meet young people's need. The supervision that staff receive increases their reflective skills, supports them to try different ways of approaching situations that they find difficult, and helps them to reflect on their strengths and areas for development. The staff are extremely positive about the support that they receive from managers. The supervision policy details what is expected of both parties and forms a sound foundation for good supervision practice. The policy is less clear about who can access supervision records when necessary. The supervisor stores the records confidentially in their personal files. The policy does not explain in what circumstances the files may be accessed for quality assurance purposes.

Extremely positive relations are developed with all professionals who support young people. Parents and professionals express their confidence in the actions of staff, including how they support young people, professionals and family members.

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: SC061795

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Southern Adolescent Care Services Ltd

Registered provider address: Room 8, Worth Corner, Turners Hill Road, Pound Hill, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 7SL

Responsible individual: Sharon Webster

Registered manager: Sharon Jenner

Inspector

Ruth Coler, social care inspector

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