

SC062013

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 this home. It is registered to give care and accommodation for two young people who may have social or emotional difficulties.

The current manager was registered with Ofsted in July 2018.

Inspection dates: 28 to 29 August 2018

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **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: 27 June 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/06/2017	Full	Good
28/03/2017	Full	Requires improvement
06/09/2016	Interim	Not judged
08/02/2016	Interim	Not judged

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 safer area report is used in conjunction with a young person's impact risk assessment to ensure that the area is safe for them. Further to this, the report should identify any known risks in the community.	31/10/2018
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 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)) In particular, ensure that only known or emerging risks are assessed.	31/10/2018
The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (4)(b)) This is specifically in relation to ensuring that the information provided is evaluated and that young people, professionals and	31/10/2018

stakeholders are regularly consulted with.	
The care planning standard is that children—	31/10/2018
receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.	
In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—	
that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(2)(c))	
In particular, ensure that young people's local authority plans are updated.	

Recommendations

- Staff should be 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)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Two young children live at this home. Professionals commented on the excellent care given to the children and the nurturing environment that has allowed the children to grow and progress. Staff's strong relationships with a range of professionals mean that the children receive well-planned care that promotes improved outcomes across all aspects of their care.

Generally, the home has all the information needed to support young people well. The children's records are regularly reviewed and updated. This means that all staff and professionals are aware of any changes to the children's care. However, one child's care plan has not been updated by the local authority, and the plan still refers to the child's earlier placement. This does not ensure that the home has all the relevant information available to it.

Children have good transitions in and out of the home. Wherever possible, the children come and visit the home, stay for tea and staff visit them in their current placement. A good child-friendly children's guide shows a child what to expect and the rules and boundaries of the home. The home has a safer area risk assessment that includes police information about the known anti-social risks and levels of criminal activity in the area. However, the manager has not identified the road in front of the home as a risk. This is

important because the children are young and there is a constant flow of traffic and a blind bend that pose a risk. Further to this, the manager did not use the safer area report to see whether the location of the home posed any risks to the children. These issues have not had an adverse impact on the children's safety but if not addressed, they have the potential to do so.

The children attend alternative educational placements that are supported by their named mainstream school. The children have excellent attendance and enjoy going to school. The children have received many 'star of the week' certificates and the staff celebrate these with extra activities, toys and magazines. Staff ensure that good routines are kept and they help the children with their homework. Excellent liaison with one child's school has meant that he has had a medication review and his medication times and dosage have been changed. This has had a positive effect and there have been fewer incidents of poor behaviour at school and in the early evenings at home.

High levels of therapeutic support provide the children with additional support to overcome their past difficulties, to develop a positive self-view and to increase their emotional resilience. For example, the staff work closely with the child and adolescent mental health service, the looked after children nurse, an autism spectrum professional and an enuresis nurse. Staff have received more training from these healthcare professionals to help them support the children. For example, an occupational therapist attended some staff meetings and discussed and demonstrated exercises that the staff could do with the child to improve his core strength. As a result, his strength improved and he has now been discharged from this service.

Staff support the children to develop and to keep good relationships and regular contact with their families. The individual local authorities supervise these visits.

The children enjoy a variety of activities. They go to the park, to the beach, to funfairs and they both like going to charity shops. One child is fascinated with the Titanic and has several books on this subject and has visited a museum in connection with this. A professional said, 'The structure and routine of his day are thoughtfully thought out, and he does something every day. He has new experiences and the staff play appropriate age-related games with him like snakes and ladders. I could not ask for more.' The children are preparing to sort out their toys and are hoping to raise money for a charity by organising a boot sale. This shows that the children have fun, exercise and hobbies, as well as having empathy for other people.

Generally, the children live in a homely environment. One child's bedroom reflects his age, his likes and his hobbies. He has numerous toys and enjoys having posters and photographs on his bedroom walls. In contrast to this, one child's bedroom is stark. He has destroyed most of his possessions, pictures, posters and furniture. The manager has tried on several occasions to introduce new items, but the child does not want them as he recognises that he will damage them. However, any maintenance issues are rectified quickly, and there is a redecoration plan for when the child moves to his new placement.

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

Professionals are very positive about the care that the children receive, and they say that the children are safe living in this home. The children have built strong and trusting relationships with the staff, who listen to them and invest time in them on a daily basis. As a result, the children are provided with support to help reduce their levels of anxiety and manage their feelings.

One child has shown extreme behaviours, such as damaging property and assaulting staff. The manager was concerned given his young age and requested a psychological assessment. This assessment was completed. The psychologist identified that the child required a one-to-one therapeutic setting. The manager has liaised with the local authority and has requested a new placement for the child. The social worker said, 'It is taking some time to find a new placement, but this home has done everything that they can for him. It is a credit to them that they continue to care for him while we find another placement for him.' In the interim, staff stay vigilant, and a high level of supervision means that both children are kept safe.

Generally, risk assessments are good, and members of staff help the children to understand risk and how to keep themselves safe. However, the manager has taken a blanket approach in assessing all risks such as self-injurious behaviour and fire setting when the children do not have a history of these concerns. This approach does not show that the children's individual needs are robustly assessed.

Since the last inspection in March 2018, there have been no episodes of the children going missing from the home or any safeguarding concerns. Staff receive regular training in these areas and can show their knowledge and what action they would take if an incident were to occur.

The children have been restrained for their safety. Staff are trained in restraint and de-escalation techniques. In addition to this, the staff team has received additional training in calming techniques. Clear records show that the intervention was necessary, and that the children and staff were debriefed after each occasion. This allows the children and staff to reflect on the incident.

Staff are using a restorative approach and a reward system to deal with negative behaviours. As a result, the children help to clean up any damage to the home, and they can earn extra money, toys or magazines for being good. In addition to this, the manager has compiled a lucky dip box with items that she knows the children like, such as hero figures, balls, paints and pens. This means that any good behaviour can be rewarded instantly through offering a choice from the box.

The company follows the safer recruitment guidance. All checks are completed and verified to make sure that members of staff are suitable to work with the children.

Regular health and safety checks mean that the home is physically safe and secure. All visitors are required to show identification and to sign in and out of the home. Children

and staff regularly take part in evacuating the building safely. This means that they know what to do in an emergency.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

An experienced manager manages this home. She is currently completing her leadership and management award. Professionals contacted as part of this inspection were very complimentary about the manager's professionalism, how she communicates with them and how the staff team go above what is expected of them. One professional said, 'I could not ask for anything more.'

Good staffing levels mean that the children receive individual support. The staff spoken to show a real commitment to their roles and talked about the children proudly. Staff say that they feel supported by the manager. They receive regular one-to-one supervision, which gives them the opportunity to reflect on their practice. In addition to this, the manager has developed a new personal development plan for each member of staff. This plan gives an account of their history and practice to date and their short-term and long-term goals. This is a live document that staff can add any interests to, such as further training and career opportunities.

Five members of staff hold a relevant childcare qualification and one member of staff is working towards this award. All staff undertake mandatory training as part of their induction, and this is refreshed regularly. Staff complete additional training specific to the children's needs, for example attachment and loss training. They have also received training in specific issues, such as radicalisation, county lines and data protection. These areas are also discussed in staff meetings. Therefore, they can reflect on how these matters may impact on them and the children in their care.

The manager and staff work collaboratively with a range of agencies and professionals who are involved in the children's care. When services have been slow to respond, not available or needed, the manager has challenged these shortfalls effectively or ensured that they had been acquired, for example additional healthcare assessments. This chasing, when necessary, means that the children receive the services that they need on time.

Generally, records and plans for the children are of good quality and show the children's vulnerabilities, progress and areas for improvement. However, staff have scribbled out mistakes in some recordings, changed dates or written over incorrect information. This approach does not make the record clear or easy to read.

The independent scrutiny of the home needs improving. The monthly reports lack evaluation of the records. For example, the independent visitor often says 'all documents in place' rather than discussing the quality of them. Also, they do not use regular consultation with the children, professionals and other stakeholders to inform the opinions on the care in the home. In contrast to this, the manager's six-monthly monitoring report is of good quality. She has a clear system for reviewing and evaluating the service that includes consultation with everyone. Therefore, she can show how the

service will develop and improve.

Effective action has been made to address the two recommendations made at the last inspection in March 2018. The gardens are well kept and are free from rubbish and cigarette stubs. Staff have completed training in radicalisation and understand their responsibilities in this area to keep children safe.

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: SC062013

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: Lisa Crowder

Inspector

Pam Nuckley: social care regulatory inspector

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