

SC062651

Registered provider: Care Focus Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for four children who present with high-risk behaviours. The aim of the home is to provide a safe, homely and nurturing environment in which the children are supported as they try to turn their lives around and assume self-control and responsibility for their own behaviour.

The manager has been registered at this home since April 2017.

Inspection dates: 14 to 15 June 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: 25 October 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/10/2017	Full	Good
11/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
31/05/2016	Full	Good
06/01/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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 registered person must ensure that— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii))	16/7/2018

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food, hygiene etc.); however in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
This is with particular regard to ensuring that all fire checks are undertaken in line with organisational policy.
- Records of restraint must be kept and should enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly when any issues or trends of concern emerge. The review should provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure it meets the needs of each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)
This is with particular regard to making clear the specific plans to reduce the use of ground holds.
- Ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph

13.1)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Parents said that they are happy with how their children are looked after and that the staff keep the children safe. One parent said:

'They [the staff] keep me well informed; I am really happy. Communication is great. They are a good bunch of staff. My child is making fantastic progress. She is doing so well, I am so pleased with her. She is a totally different child to when she came in. She is doing well in her education, as before she used to play truant all of the time.'

The children are engaging in education. Some have completed exams and are now looking for apprenticeships and work experience. They have clear pathway plans, and the staff support them with their plans for independence. Children have part-time jobs and are developing their independence skills. Consequently, they are becoming prepared for the future.

The staff encourage and facilitate family contact, which enables the children to maintain important relationships even though they are away from home. The manager regularly monitors and reviews the children's progress in this area and communicates this to the placing local authority for the child.

Staff spend time undertaking direct work with the children. The children know when these individual sessions will happen and look forward to them. One child, who said that these sessions take place regularly, is developing her skills and knowledge in keeping herself safe from sexual exploitation. The children said that they can talk to the staff, and if they want to complain they know how to. The children recognise how far they have come. One child said:

'I am doing so well. I had been really putting myself at risk and going missing. I think that the home has helped me. It has helped me stay away from the bad influences where I used to live; I wasn't safe then. I am now going to college, I have done my exams and I am doing really well in my life.'

The children have the opportunity to engage in a number of activities in the community, which develops their confidence and social skills. They feel able to pursue their own interests if they wish.

The children have clear and current health plans. Some of the children have complex emotional needs, and additional support is sought for these children as needed. The staff work with other agencies and professionals to ensure that there is a holistic approach. A professional said:

'The staff are brilliant, really good. They [the staff] always get in touch if there are issues. If there are concerns, I can always contact them. They are really on the ball with everything. I know that they will make sure that the child knows about the appointments; they are really efficient with this. I have no concerns or issues at all. I think that they are really good.'

The staff are trained to use a therapeutic approach to support children emotionally as much as possible. Staff recognise that it is important that the children have the space to talk to a therapist and other professionals. Placing authorities are happy with the care provided to their children. A social worker said:

'My child is well looked after and she is making so much progress. They [the staff] have done a fantastic and amazing job with her. She is now a mature young lady and is doing so well. She has made significant progress compared to how she was when she arrived; she was challenging and difficult when she arrived.'

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

The manager works effectively with the designated officer, consulting and reporting any allegations. Incident reports and physical intervention reports are forwarded to the social workers. This effective communication ensures that all professionals are aware of any escalating behaviours and the action taken by the home. A professional said:

'My child has had several placement moves prior to being here. This is the most stable placement that she has had; she has boundaries. There were significant concerns regarding the risks, and this was the last resort before secure accommodation was found. There is a child-centred approach here. The staff are firm and fair with her and they recognise the voice of the child.'

During a period of highly challenging behaviour, the manager liaised proactively with the placing authority for the child concerned. The manager attended regular professionals' meetings to review the child's progress and to discuss escalating incidents. Clear behaviour management plans guided the staff in managing extremely difficult behaviour. The manager has reflected on this period, with the staff team, and said that there has been significant learning as a result.

The staff use physical intervention when the children present a risk to themselves or others. The staff are well trained in managing children who are traumatised and have physically challenging behaviours. Many of the children have been exposed to violent experiences or have been the perpetrators of violence. This means that, at times, they act in a way that can be extreme and dangerous. Ground holds are used only when needed. There are debriefings with the children and the staff following these incidents. Practice could further improve by making clear in the records that each ground hold is used as a last resort and making clear the plans to reduce the use of ground holds for the child concerned.

The physical intervention records are detailed, explaining the hold, the length of hold

and the details of the incident. However, these records are not reviewed in a timely way by the manager. In addition, it is not appropriate for the manager to oversee interventions and sanctions that she has been involved in. This does not reflect a fully transparent and proportionate oversight process.

Fire checks are not undertaken in line with organisational policy. This does not provide a sound review of all aspects of fire safety at the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The skilled and experienced manager ensures that the home is well run. She forms good relationships with other professionals and agencies. This provides a joined-up approach to the care of the children, ensuring that communication is effective and regular.

Several staff members have left the home for a variety of reasons. New staff have been recruited and the staff are regrouping. Currently, new staff are being trained. The staff said that the induction process and training provision is good.

The staff feel well supported by their manager and said that they get on well with each other. The staff prioritise the needs of the children and are committed to ensuring that the children are safe and well cared for.

The manager works well with her deputy, who has recently been promoted to this role. Both understand the ethos of the home. The therapeutic approach informs all of the practice at the home. The children benefit from this consistency.

The manager knows the children well and is involved in their day-to-day care. She is clear about the current care plans for the children and has good oversight of their progress and targets.

The manager recognises that the staff team is a good asset to the home. The staff are able to approach the manager if they have any concerns or issues, on an informal basis. The staff receive formal supervision, but it is not detailed or regular enough and does not provide staff with the ongoing support that they need.

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: SC062651

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care Focus Limited

Registered provider address: 3rd Floor, 24 Chiswell Street, London EC1Y 4YX

Responsible individual: Jean Lloyd

Registered manager: Hayley Stoddart

Inspector

Debbie Young: social care inspector

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