

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC062674
Inspector	Sharon Lloyd
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Considerate Care Limited
Registered person address	Millers Accountants 69 Windsor Road, Prestwich MANCHESTER M25 0DB
Responsible individual	William Frederick Aspinall
Registered manager	Claire Elizabeth Smart
Date of last inspection	28/03/2014

Inspection date	03/12/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people are relaxed and happy in the home. They say staff care about them and the home 'feels like a home should feel'.

Young people make good progress in relation to their starting points across all aspects of their welfare and development. Their health needs are well met. Their life chances improve because of better engagement with education and better achievement. They receive high quality support that promotes their independence and helps them to stay safe. They reduce their engagement with criminality and are at less risk of being missing than in previous placements.

Individual placement plans and behaviour management strategies guide staff to provide personalised, well-planned care. Communication and collaborative working with other agencies is a key strength of the home. A professional from a partner agency said, 'They do really collaborative working; it's one of the best care homes I've worked with and I work with a lot.'

Three members of staff, including the deputy manager, have left and this has placed a strain on the remaining staff. It has led to some gaps in the formal supervision of staff, although the impact of this on children is minimal. A suitably qualified and experienced deputy has been appointed and this has strengthened the leadership

and management of the home.

Training has not included specialist training in e-safety and this means not all staff are confident in their ability to safeguard children who access social media on their mobile phones. The manager is researching suitable training to address this matter.

Management monitoring reports are not completed at the required frequency or in line with statutory requirements. The home's location is suitable but it has not yet completed a location assessment. These shortfalls have minimal impact on children.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The service, run by a private organisation, is registered to care for up to four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/03/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
15/01/2014	Full	adequate
06/03/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
28/11/2012	Full	good

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at least once in every 3 months; and improving the quality of care. Supply to HMCI a report in respect of any review conducted for the purpose. (Regulation 34 (1)(2))	31/12/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that staff have access to support and advice, and are provided with

regular supervision by appropriately qualified and experienced staff (NMS 19.4)

- ensure staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and the purpose of the setting, and training keeps them up-to-date with professional, legal and practice developments and reflects the policies and legal obligations of the home. In particular, ensure staff have good knowledge and skills in e-safety (NMS 18.1)
- ensure that where any sanctions, disciplinary measures or restraint are used, children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home. In particular, ensure that the home's permanent log books demonstrate this (NMS 3.18)
- ensure that children are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour, in a way that is appropriate to their age and abilities. In particular, consider using restorative justice to help children understand the impact of their behaviour on others and learn acceptable ways of managing conflict. (NMS 3.6)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people feel secure in the home and over time they develop confidence and self-esteem that equips them better for life. One young person said, 'Before I came here I used to only feel secure in my room with the door locked...I feel better here. I have come out of my shell - I feel emotionally safe.'

Young people maintain contact with their families and over time with support from staff they re-establish damaged and broken relationships. This helps them to develop a sense of identity and belonging.

Young people have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. They eat a well-balanced diet that promotes their good health. Fruit is freely available while sweets and snacks are limited. This helps to raise young people's awareness of the importance of good nutrition. Young people receive support to maintain good sexual health.

Young people make progress in their education and some significantly improve their attendance and attainment levels, achieving well beyond their expected grades. Others do less well but make progress from their starting points over time. Young people above school age benefit from support and encouragement to attend college or engage in suitable apprenticeships. Where they are not happy with their chosen course, the home helps them to make changes and this promotes better engagement and improves their chances of success. Some young people who have made good progress at school are struggling to achieve success in the less structured world of college and the workplace. This places them at risk of unemployment in the future.

The home provides young people with opportunities to develop their skills and interests through participation in activities of their choice. They enjoy following their individual interests and participating in group activities that promote their social development and confidence. For example, some young people enjoy horse riding and all enjoy climbing. Some enjoy spending time with friends locally. Young people's friends are made welcome at the home and this helps young people to feel cared for and that they belong.

Through routine engagement in household chores, budgeting, shopping and cooking, young people learn the skills they need for future independent living.

One child has left the home since the last inspection. This was an unplanned but well managed move to a more suitable placement due to escalating anxiety and challenging behaviour which the staff team struggled to manage. The child received appropriate support from the staff team leading up to and after the move. One young person has been admitted to the home in the last two months and is making good

progress in all aspects of their development.

Quality of care

good

Young people benefit from constructive and nurturing relationships with staff. This promotes a reduction in challenging behaviour and anxieties and the development of social skills. Young people feel that staff care about them and want the best for them. For example, one said, 'Staff are very interested in you - in what they can do to help you improve your life - that's really nice'.

Staff use incentives and rewards to promote acceptable behaviour. The use of sanctions is reducing and this is resulting in a more relaxed and pleasant environment where young people feel cared for. Restorative justice is not widely used. As a result, some young people do not understand the impact of their behaviour on others and do not always accept responsibility for misdemeanours and anti-social behaviour.

Staff support young people to attend school by transporting them to and from school where necessary and encouraging them with their studies. They collaborate effectively with schools and colleges to make sure young people have every opportunity to make the most of their education. They effectively challenge barriers to education so that over time, young people with a history of poor attendance at school re-engage with education and this improves their life chances.

The child and adolescent mental health service provides support to young people who need it. This promotes improvements in their emotional and mental health and a reduction in anxiety and self-harm. The waiting time for this service varies. Young people in crisis receive an immediate service and fast assessment. Those waiting for specialist support may have to wait for several weeks before they receive the support they need. Not all young people avail of this service but the home encourages them to attend appointments and provides emotional support through key worker sessions and nurturing relationships.

The well-being of young people is central to the home's practice and staff follow individualised placement plans, which are specifically tailored to meet the unique needs of each young person. Staff involve young people in their own plans and arrangements for their care. They listen to their views and take them into account in decision-making. A young person said, 'Knowing there is always someone to talk to day or night is good. It feels like a proper home and that's nice.' Young people are confident they can make a complaint and it will be taken seriously.

Professionals recognise that staff go the extra mile to support young people. One

said, 'The home is really pro-active - without their support this young person would definitely not be where she is now and would not have made this level of progress.'

Young people live in a homely and comfortable environment. The house has recently being is decorated and refurbished to a good standard.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people report they 'definitely feel safe here'. They describe good health and safety routines and fire safety precautions. They recognise that the home is kept safe from intruders. They report there is no bullying at the home and where they are at risk of bullying in school, staff intervene effectively to prevent its escalation.

Restraint is used minimally and only to prevent serious harm. There has been one restraint in the home since the last inspection, which was used appropriately to prevent harm to young people. Staff take action to intervene and seek medical help when young people are at risk because of self-harm. This promotes young people's safety, welfare and mental health. Staff are familiar with child protection procedures and know how to respond to an allegation of abuse against a colleague or a disclosure of abuse about another person. There have been no allegations since the last inspection.

Strong and pro-active working with partner agencies including the police, youth offending service and local authority safeguarding teams ensure that a multi-agency approach is taken to safeguarding young people. The swift and safe return of young people who are absent without permission or missing from care is achieved through effective collaborative working with other agencies, parents and young people. Staff spend time talking to young people on their return to ascertain where they have been and why they went missing. Young people also have access to specialist services for missing young people in the area, such as 'Catch 22'. This provides them with the opportunity to speak to someone independent of the home on their return. Young people who regularly went missing from previous placements reduce this risk-taking behaviour and this means they are kept safer and are at less risk of sexual exploitation.

The home promotes the safety of young people using the computer through close supervision, strong internet safety measures and sound advice and guidance. Young people benefit from these measures by having a greater awareness of the dangers of misusing social media. A professional from a partner agency said a young person, 'showed a depth of knowledge and understanding that many young people don't have. It was much better than most. I see so many children who live in children's homes or at home who don't have this level of understanding.' Despite this, staff are aware that they need to build on their knowledge and skills in this important aspect of safeguarding.

Robust recruitment of new staff ensures as far as possible that only suitable people are employed to work with young people.

Leadership and management

adequate

The Registered Manager has twenty five years of experience in looking after children and young people in social care. She has managed this home for nine years. She is suitably qualified to lead and manage the staff team.

Three members of staff, including the deputy manager, have left the home since the last inspection. The depleted staff team has risen to the challenge of covering the rota and maintaining consistency of care for young people, with assistance from a small number of regular agency workers. This has reduced the impact of staff shortages on the young people.

A successful recruitment campaign, which involved young people interviewing prospective candidates, has resulted in the appointment of a new deputy manager. He is suitably experienced and qualified and has begun to work with the Registered Manager to drive further improvement in the quality of care and record keeping.

The Registered Manager receives valuable one-to-one professional supervision from a suitably qualified person. This assists her to reflect on the home's practice, identify areas for improvement and make effective decisions. There have been some gaps in the formal supervision of some staff. As a result, staff dealing with complex and challenging young people have not always had good direction. Nor have they had the opportunity to seek advice and have regular assessment of their performance to improve their practice.

The home provides a rolling programme of staff training that provides staff with the basic skills they need to work with young people with complex and challenging emotional and behavioural needs. Not all staff have received focused training on aspects of care relevant to the young people the home looks after, such as e-safety or bereavement. This limits their skills in working with the particular needs of some young people.

The manager of the home monitors the performance of the home each month and provides a review report to Ofsted every six months. This does not meet the change in regulations introduced in April 2014. The reports are descriptive and show limited evaluation of young people's progress. They do not give a comprehensive analysis of the home's performance, strengths and areas for development. The impact of this shortfall on young people's outcomes has been minimal.

Young people's records are mostly well maintained and provide an informative record

of young people's lives. The home is pro-active in seeking minutes of statutory reviews and prompting meetings with placing agencies where necessary. Key worker sessions demonstrate effective working with young people on aspects of their lives that are important to them.

Two of the three recommendations made following the last inspection have been met and one has been partially met. The home maintains a record of allegations against staff. The manager has enrolled on a Level 5 Diploma course to update her managerial and social care knowledge and skills. Two members of staff are not yet suitably qualified but are undertaking a qualification in children's social care at Diploma level 3. Young people do not always comment on measures of control used to discipline them and do not always sign to show they have understood the measure and the reason for it. This means their views are not captured in the home's records.

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.