

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	10/11/2015
Unique reference number	SC062674
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 Aspinall
Registered manager	Claire Smart
Inspector	Nick Veysey

Inspection date	10/11/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
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

SC062674

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people live in a very caring children's home that is making a positive difference to their lives. They are making excellent progress in all areas of their development. They have strong and trusting relationships with staff and they know that staff are on their side and want what is best for them.
- The manager and staff have a clear understanding of the risks that individual young people face and work very effectively with other agencies to reduce any risk of harm to them, including those associated sexual exploitation, emotional distress and domestic abuse.
- The manager and staff engage exceptionally well with partner services to ensure young people's needs are fully met and they get the best possible support. They are skilled at identifying areas of unmet need and actively finding the right support for the young people at the right time. They have challenged placing authorities when they feel that young people are not getting the support they need to help them.
- The home is effectively managed in the best interests of the young people. The staff are highly skilled and are committed to supporting the young people to improve their opportunities and outcomes. They understand how their work and commitment is helping to make a difference. They work hard to find solutions when are young people struggling.
- The monitoring of the home by the independent person lacks detailed analysis to show how well young people's welfare is being promoted and safeguarded. Also, the monitoring would benefit from routine formal consultation with young people, parents and its partners.
- The quality of the home's written records needs to improve to show a comprehensive picture of young people's views, experiences and progress that contributes to a fuller understanding of their lives, needs and the support they require. Also, the house would benefit from being decorated to improve the quality of the accommodation.

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

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 (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must ensure that the independent person, if they consent, interviews in private the children, their parents, relatives, and people working at the home. Also the independent visitor seeks the views of social workers, independent reviewing officers, and other people supporting the children. (Regulation 44 (a))	31/12/2015
The registered person must ensure that the independent person produces a report which sets out the independent person's opinion, as to whether children are effectively safeguarded and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. In particular the report provides a thorough and detailed evaluation of the home's effectiveness in these areas. (Regulation 44 (4)(a)&(b))	31/12/2015
The registered person must supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed. (Regulation 45(4)(a))	31/12/2015

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the home's records on each child represent a significant contribution to their life history. In particular children's progress reports provide a full account of children's experiences and progress, the support and guidance they receive, the staff's assessment of their progress and the support required to meet their needs and promote their development. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 62, paragraph 14.5)
- Enhance the quality of the decoration of the physical surroundings to ensure children feel that they are living in a bright, homely and welcoming environment. (The Guide to the Quality Standards page 15, paragraph 3.7)

- Ensure children are encouraged by staff to see the home's records as living documents supporting them to view and contribute to the record in a way that reflects their voice on a regular basis, for example in their monthly reports and care plans (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 58, paragraph 11.19)
- Ensure that children's case records are kept up-to-date and include the recommendations and decisions from each child's review of the placement meetings. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 62, paragraph 14.3)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home provides care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
03/12/2014	Full	Good
28/03/2014	Interim	Satisfactory progress
15/01/2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Young people receive a high quality of care that is making a significant difference to their lives. The staff ensure that they get the personalised support and guidance they need. They are safer, increasingly resilient, take part in meaningful education and enjoyable activities, and managing their feelings more constructively. When young people are struggling, feeling upset, anxious and frustrated, the staff make every effort to understand the problem and provide them with the support and guidance they need. Young people have strong and trusting relationships with the manager and staff. They respond positively to the staff's open and honest approach. They know that staff are always be straight with them, tell them the truth, stand by their word, and fight for them to get the best possible support and opportunities. A social worker said: 'They have an excellent relationship with her because are honest with her.' Disagreements and arguments can be heated, but are always resolved amicably because of staff's consistent and fair approach. Also, young people know the manager and staff care about them, want them to be safe, and what is best for them. Young people feel that the staff listen to them and respect their wishes and feelings. A young person said: 'I can talk to the staff. They take my worries seriously and try their best to sort things out. I sit down next to staff on the sofa and talk things out.' The manager and staff encourage young people to express their views and take part in all the decisions about their lives. They make choices about what they have to eat, how they spend their time, their education and training, their health, and what they want to happen in the future. The staff also help them to understand their wishes may not be always followed when it may not be in their best interests. For example, they have helped a young person put back her plan to return to live nearer her family until she has completed her GCSEs next summer. She feels that this was good and sensible advice because her education will not be disrupted. She can concentrate getting on with her exams without having to worry about getting to know new people. Also she knows that ultimately she will get her wish but at a time that is right for her. The manager and staff have a detailed understanding of the young people, their individual needs, views, the risks they face, and how best to help them. The staff consistently follow young people's placement plans and ensure that they receive	

good individual support and guidance. They work exceptionally well with social workers, teachers, health workers, therapists and the police to make sure young people get the right support from the right services at the right time. A social worker said: 'The communication from the staff is excellent. I always know what is going on and they take the initiative to get her the help she needs.' Another social worker said: 'Staff have always worked well with myself and the other professionals involved with the young person and have gone above and beyond for him.'

The staff are very knowledgeable about the support services available to young people. They identify when young people are experiencing difficulties, for example, struggling emotionally with moving on to live more independently or using cannabis. And quickly get specialist services involved to help the young people, including involving services that have successfully helped them in the past. The staff work well alongside the specialist services in delivering support plans. A drug and alcohol worker said: 'Of all the care homes that we work in across the city they are very proactive in meeting with our services and exploring the work and deploy our service when they identified that the young people in their care needed support from us regarding their drug and alcohol issues.'

The manager and staff have played an active role in making sure that young people who live a long way from their homes have easy access to health, education, and therapeutic services in the local area. The manager anticipated that there may be delays in finding a school for a young person, who came to live at the home in an emergency, and quickly found appropriate alternative until a suitable school was identified. Consequently, the young person's education was disrupted as little as possible.

Young people see and speak regularly to their family and other significant people; helping them to maintain important relationships. Their friends and family receive a warm welcome when they visit. The staff make sure this is a safe and positive experience for everyone.

The manager and staff clearly recognise and value importance of education and training for young people's future. They enthusiastically encourage young people to learn and develop their knowledge and skills. Young people are motivated to learn and do well, attending every day and working hard. The staff have a very good understanding of young people's skills, abilities, progress and achievements. A young person has recently done very well in her mock exams GCSE, she is working above the expected level, and is on track to achieve over five GCSEs at grades A to C. Her last school report noted: 'She is doing extremely well, taking part in school life and has sensible and positive approach to school life. She is a conscientious student always tries hard in class. A friendly member of the group who mixes well with the other students.'

The manager and staff work hard with the young people, schools, colleges and

training providers to tackle any barriers to learning and participation. Some young people have struggled since leaving school. They have tried a number of different courses and a part-time job before finding the right direction. They now routinely take part in education and training, enhancing their chances of employment. A young person is completing an employability and mechanics course and soon will be ready to apply for an apprenticeship. Another young person is trying out taster courses and is thinking about a career in childcare. The staff are good at keeping young people motivated and sort out funding for training that suits their interests and skills. A police officer; 'the staff have done a very good job at keeping the young person in education when other people may have given up. Keeping him focused in education has steered him away from getting involved in more serious or criminal behaviour.'

The young people enjoy a wide range of interesting and fun activities. Staff support them to them to have hobbies and follow their interests, including horse riding, climbing, camping, visiting museums, motor sports, and keeping a pet.

The young people live in a healthy environment that actively promotes their physical health emotional well-being. They are healthy, enjoy balanced and nutritious diets and get plenty of physical exercise. They have a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and are making positive choices about their health; including choosing to attend health appointments. Staff take prompt action when young people are unwell, ensuring that they get the medical attention, assessment, treatment and advice they require. They work closely with the community mental health services to understand young people's emotional needs and deliver personalised care that has reduced their anxieties and built resilience. They work extremely hard to make sure the young people get the right support at the right time. When young people have asked for help and been ready to talk about their experiences support is always available.

Young people get the right support and guidance to help them become more independence and prepare for adult life. The staff ensure that young people have plenty of opportunities to develop practical life skills, including shopping, cooking and managing money. They play an active role in helping young people move out into their own accommodation, helping them to find the right place to live with the support they need, and to furnish and equip their new place. They also understand that moving on is worrying time for young people. They provide young people with lots of reassurance, guidance and emotional support to help them negotiate this significant change.

The house is suitably located, designed, and provides a homely domestic environment. The young people have their own personal space and comfortable bedrooms that reflect their characters and interests. However, the house is showing signs of normal wear and tear, and is in need of redecoration to brighten it up.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
The young people are considerably safer because of the staff's strong safe care practices. A social worker said: 'This is a safe place for the young person. She was at high risk of child sexual exploitation. This has reduced while she has been here and is not at risk anymore.' The manager and staff know the young people well and quickly pick up when something is wrong, for example noticing changes in their behaviour or mood. The young people feel safe. They trust staff and feel able talk to them about their worries. The staff take concerns about young people seriously and respond decisively to reduce any risk of harm to them, including those associated with sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, self-harm and social media. They work collaboratively with social workers, the police, and local designated officer to understand risk and protect the young people. They use detailed written risk assessments to develop a clear understanding of risks to individual young people's safety and to guide them successfully to manage and reduce these risks. The staff help young people to understand risk and promote their own personal safety; including helping them to recognise that they deserve to have trusting, loving and mutually supportive relationships. The manager and staff work effectively with the police and placing authorities when young people have been missing or have not come in on time. They use their initiative to go out to look for them, try to contact them by mobile phone and social media, check with their family and friends, and check the places they usually go. They share what information they have with the police to help them narrow their search. When young people are found, they have received the reassurance and support they needed to be welcomed home safely. They have the chance to talk privately to an independent person about the reasons for them being away from home. This has helped the staff, social workers and the police to understand the risks and provide appropriate support to encourage them to not go missing. Young people's behaviour is usually extremely positive. The staff provide young people with the level of structure and routine they need to feel safe and secure. Young people have clear and fair boundaries that help them to know what is safe and acceptable, and how they will be looked after by the staff. This is helping the young people to feel less anxious, and manage their feelings and behaviour more safely. Some young people still struggle with strong emotions and frustrations. The staff work together very well to deal with these situations. They listen to the young person and try to find a solution to the immediate problem and the underlying reason. They calmly and assertively challenge unacceptable behaviour, which is mostly verbal aggression. This approach is effective in helping young people	

understand about socially acceptable behaviour while giving them the opportunity to feel calm and work through their worries. The manager and staff show considerable insight into individual young people's worries and how these affect their behaviour. They use team meetings constructively to reflect on young people's emotional security and behaviour and to devise consistent strategies for helping young people manage their feelings.

The staff working with young people are carefully vetted and selected. This ensures that they have the experience and right skills, values and motivation, and prevents unsuitable people from working at the home. People wishing to work at the home go through a rigorous selection procedure including meeting the young people. A young person said she felt that the manager listened to her views about the people wanting to work at the home. She had met the new deputy manager and really like him because 'he was very easy to get on with and good to talk to.'

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The Registered Manager has a suitable professional qualification, considerable experience of working with young people and managing and leading this children's home. She ensures that the home runs efficiently and consistently with the objectives set out in its statement of purpose and in the best interests of young people. The culture and ethos of the home reflects a strongly child-centred approach and commitment to promoting and safeguarding young people's welfare. The young people are looked after by enthusiastic and caring people. They clearly enjoy their work and are proud of young people's progress. They show a strong commitment to ensuring that each young person, regardless of the difficulties they are experiencing, is safe, valued, and gets the best possible opportunities to promote their life chances. The deployment of staff promotes young people's safety and suitable daily routines. The staff are very well supported by the manager through regular professional supervision, performance appraisals and team meetings. They have opportunities to review and reflect young people's progress and needs, their own performance and development needs, the running of the home and how best to develop and improve the standard of care and support. All the staff are either suitably qualified or working towards gaining their qualifications. They now receive training to develop their individual skills and knowledge, including in safeguarding, child sexual exploitation, attachment, e-safety, self-harm, autism, and attention	

difficulties. Also, they keep up to date with new legislation and guidance around female genital mutilation and radicalisation. The manager is taking steps to ensure that staff receive more advanced and better quality training in managing behaviour.

The manager and staff have strong working relationships with parents, mental health community service, schools, training providers, health services, the police, independent reviewing officers and social workers to make sure young people receive the best possible support. They ensure that young people's care plans fully address their needs and experiences, reflect changes to their circumstances, and sets out the plans for their futures. They routinely attend young people's reviews, help young people to express their views and champion their needs. They contribute to and influence decisions about young people's plans. They effectively challenge placing authorities and take action when they are concerned that young people are not receiving the support they need. For example, the manager has taken reasonable steps to ensure that a young person's leaving care plan is not allowed to drift.

The manager and staff actively promote positive relationships in the local community. The young people have lived in the home for a number of years and have established friendships and are usually on good terms with local people. The manager responds promptly to any concerns raised by their neighbours. For example, she has worked with young people and the local police to deal with some low level anti-social behaviour.

The manager has a reasonably clear understanding about the strengths of the home and the areas for improvement. She is already taking action to improve the quality of staff training and help to develop staff's knowledge of the new children's homes regulations. Since the last inspection, she has improved the quality of the statement of purpose and the assessment of the home's location, and young people are now able to use the kitchen at night unless there is an immediate risk to their safety. The manager routinely monitors the quality of care and is developing systems for accurately measuring young people's progress. However, she has not completed a written review of the quality of care pulling together key themes and trends to inform the development of the home, and sent a copy to Ofsted.

Overall, the quality of the monitoring of the home by the independent person is weak. The monitoring reports are descriptive and do not provide a thorough and detailed evaluation of the home's effectiveness in safeguarding young people and promoting their well-being. Also, the reports do not include consultation with young people, parents, social workers, and other agencies about the quality of the home. As a result it is not taking into account how others view and experience the

support provided in order to develop the home.

The quality of the written records do not always provide a comprehensive picture of young people's lives that makes a contribution to the understanding of their lives. Young people's progress reports do not provide a full account of their experiences and progress, the support and guidance they receive, the staff's assessment of their progress and the support required to meet their needs and promote their development. For example, a progress report did not show the work staff had done with a young person to prepare her for independence's or staff assessment of her life skills. Young people's files are not kept up-to-date and include the recommendations and decisions from their review meetings. Also, they are not encouraged to read and contribute their views to their monthly progress reports and care plans. This is a missed opportunity to help young people have their say about how they feel things are going and influence decisions about their care and support.

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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