

SC062674

Registered provider: Considerate Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home provides care and accommodation for four young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

Inspection dates: 18 to 19 October 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	Good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 15 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people have positive experiences living in this friendly, supportive and comfortable home. The very high standard of individualised care consistently meets young people's needs and improves their lives.
- Young people trust staff and feel at home. Importantly, young people have strong attachments and positive relationships with the people looking after them. Staff's natural warmth and humour allows them to engage young people and help them have a strong sense of belonging.
- Young people feel safe and are considerably safer from the risks of abuse, neglect and exploitation. Well-established and highly effective partnerships with the local police, social workers, schools and health professionals ensure that, when risks to young people are identified, they are managed exceedingly well. Staff are helping young people to identify and manage risks, recognise harmful relationships and make positive choices to keep themselves and other young people safe from harm.
- Under the registered manager's strong and effective leadership, caring, experienced, skilled, qualified and well-supported staff provide a high quality of care for each young person. The staffing arrangements are efficiently organised to provide young people with a continuity of care that meets their needs and provides opportunities for them to form positive attachments.
- The registered manager has a clear and accurate understanding of young people's progress and the key priorities for each young person. Her effective monitoring of the quality of care and support means that she has a realistic understanding of how well the staff are promoting and safeguarding young people's welfare and the priorities for making further improvements.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Young people not in education, employment and training should have a suitably structured daily routine that includes activities that help to prepare them for work, education or apprenticeships.
- The review of the quality of care provided needs to show the impact that it is having on young people's experiences and outcomes.
- All staff should attend team meetings frequently to enable them to reflect on young people's progress and support plans, share information about the running of the home, and have the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge.
- Reviews of staff's performance and suitability should take into account young people's views and those of any professionals working with the member of staff.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
21/06/2016	Full	Good
23/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
10/11/2015	Full	Good

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
8: The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment; and help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the children's relevant plans. (Regulation 8(2)(ix)&(x)) In particular, ensure that each young person who is above compulsory school age maintains a suitable daily routine that helps each young person to prepare to take part, or maintain participation in, education, employment or training.	30/11/2017

Recommendations

- All staff, including staff working at night and relief staff, should routinely attend staff meetings to ensure that staff understand and consistently follow the home's policies and procedures; understand their roles and responsibilities; children's needs and support plans; and have opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge and reflect on children's progress. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.20)
- Take into account, where reasonable and practical, the views of the children and other professionals, when reviewing the performance of each member of staff. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)
- Ensure that the registered manager's review of the quality of care provided by the home evaluates the impact the care is having on outcomes and improvements for the children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64-65, paragraph 15.2)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people live in a warm, nurturing, supportive and comfortable home. They receive a very high quality of care from caring and skilled staff. Young people said 'I love it, it's the best place', 'Everything is good about my home, I love living here and I love all the staff and enjoy everything that is offered to me' and 'The staff have taught me a lot since I have been here.' Young people have consistent personalised support that meets their assessed needs and this has brought stability to their lives. This has helped them to feel safe, valued and loved. Young people have positive experiences and are making progress. They are safer, happier, healthier, have positive relationships, have a better understanding of their experiences, are building their confidence and can manage their feelings constructively.

The registered manager and staff have a detailed understanding of young people's individual needs and the arrangements for their care. The registered manager ensures that young people move in only when she is confident that the staff have the expertise to respond effectively to the young person's assessed needs and have considered the impact the move may have on the young person and the young people already living there.

Young people's written plans are living documents that take into account young people's progress, changes in their circumstances, new information, and what is happening at the moment in their life. Staff use this up-to-date information to make sure that young people's needs are being met and that they get the best possible support. The registered manager and staff get to know young people well and find out what works for individual young people. Staff engage naturally with young people with warmth and humour. Their excellent interpersonal skills help them to build positive and trusting relationships with young people. Staff's perseverance and unconditional support help young people understand that staff care about them, are interested in their welfare, want what is best for them, encourage and support their talents and always take their wishes and feelings seriously. Staff work sensitively with young people to help them understand why they are not living with their parents and to help them make sense of their experiences. Through this work, staff help young people to understand the impact of their choices and experiences on their welfare and other people. A member of staff was able to show how a young person had a clearer understanding of what happened to her and the risks involved, and that the young person was becoming more confident and resilient to recover from her experiences.

The registered manager and staff empower young people to express themselves as individuals, taking into account their age, gender, culture and language needs. They fully take into account the individual needs of young people living a long way from their family home. They help young people to maintain important links with their family and to see their families. The registered manager also makes sure that young people have access to local education and health services that meet their language and cultural needs. Staff encourage and support young people's cultural identity through food, opportunities to meet with other young people from the same background and language,

and to build strong links with their local community.

Young people have suitable freedom and choice in relation to the day-to-day arrangements for their care. They make decisions about their clothes, the food they eat, how they spend their spare time, the quality of their care, and people who come to work at the home. Staff balance young people's preferences against what they judge to be in the young person's best interests and work out the best way forward. Staff help young people to put across their views in the right way in order to achieve the desired outcome. For example, a member of staff helped a young person to write a letter to her social worker about spending more time with her family. This has helped things move forward positively with the young person now seeing her family more often, including staying overnight with them.

Young people are also fully involved in decisions about their lives, including choices around seeing their family, education and training and plans for their future. Staff encourage and support young people to go to review meetings and talk about their wishes. Staff also help young people explore their options to help them work out what they want to happen in the future. A young person said, 'I have a lot of things going around in my head, like should I stay in this city or go back to my family? It's hard to know what is best. Staff are helping me think about what I want to do.'

Staff recognise that leaving home and thinking about the future can be a stressful time for any young person, so they work hard to make sure that young people get the right practical and emotional support to help them prepare for adult life. Staff support young people to develop practical life skills, including shopping, cooking and managing money, finding and setting up a new home, finding out where they can get support when they need it, understanding their rights and entitlements as care leavers.

The registered manager and staff make sure that young people live in a healthy environment. Young people's physical health, as well as their emotional well-being, continues to improve. They have healthy diets. A young person said, 'The fridge is never empty. It's filled with healthy food.' The staff support and ensure that young people get good support from health services to meet their needs and help them understand about healthy lifestyles, including sexual health and relationships, misusing drugs and alcohol, and being physically active. Staff have an excellent understanding of young people's specific health needs and manage their health with sensitivity and confidence. Staff closely monitor young people to make sure that they are healthy, and ensure that young people always get suitable medical advice and treatment when they are feeling unwell or if they are concerned about their health. The arrangements for managing young people's medication are managed safely.

The registered manager and staff make sure that young people have every opportunity to take part in activities that they are interested in, enjoy their leisure time and develop their talents. Most of the young people prefer to spend time with their friends than taking part in organised activities. Nevertheless, they have the chance to go ice skating, trampolining, bowling, playing pool and go-karting. This is helping young people to gain confidence in their abilities, have fun, acquire new skills and improve their social and emotional skills.

The registered manager and staff encourage and support young people to take part and

do well in education. One young person's school attendance is excellent. He enjoys school and is making progress. However, the other three young people have now left school and are currently not in education, employment or training. They have been in work and have attended college, but these programmes have not worked out for them. The registered manager and staff understand the barriers to the young people making progress. They are working with a careers advisor, colleges and training providers to identify new opportunities that will meet each young person's interests and skills. Staff have also been helping young people to apply for jobs, apprenticeships, and voluntary work as a way into full-time employment. Staff work well with the young people to build their skills, qualifications and confidence in interviews. They continue to motivate young people to keep trying and to prevent them from getting disheartened after they have been unsuccessful. A young person said, 'Staff help me with some things I don't understand, like looking for jobs. They have helped me to apply online. I have applied for lots – it's hard. I had an interview, I was very nervous, and didn't get it.'

Despite staff's efforts, these young people are not achieving positive educational outcomes. One of the young people in particular does not have a suitable daily routine that will help to prepare him to take part and maintain participation in education, employment or training.

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

Young people feel safe and are protected from harm. They feel able to talk to staff about their worries and when they feel unsure. A young person said, 'The staff are funny and brilliant. They help a lot and listen to everything I say and help me sort problems.'

The registered manager and staff know how to meet each young person's emotional needs. They see beyond young people's presenting behaviour and clearly understand how young people's experiences may leave them feeling rejected, anxious and angry, and struggle to trust adults. Staff work hard to develop safe, reliable and stable relationships that help young people build secure attachments. Young people feel respected and treated fairly. They show a strong sense of belonging and emotional well-being. Staff provide young people with clear and suitable boundaries that help them feel safe and help them understand socially acceptable behaviour. Staff encourage positive relationships and behaviour through praise and rewards with promising results, for example when there is a reduction in aggressive behaviour. Staff help young people when they struggle to manage their feelings. Staff assist young people to control their behaviour safely by developing skills to understand how their behaviour affects others, and to sort out problems. Staff always take appropriate action to help young people feel calm and safe.

The quality of young people's relationships with the registered manager and staff is the key factor in young people being considerably safer since coming to live in this home. The safeguarding arrangements protect them well. Staff are skilled at recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse and if young people are groomed for exploitation. They identify and manage risk safely, and meet all the statutory safeguarding requirements, including reducing the risk of sexual exploitation. The day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep young people safe and to protect each of them effectively from harm. This includes staff checking on young people's welfare when they arrive back at

the home and if they are concerned about getting young people suitable medical support and treatment. The location, design and maintenance of the house protects young people from avoidable hazards to their health.

The registered manager and staff are vigilant and take prompt and decisive action to deal with any concerns about the young people's safety. Staff share information about their concerns about young people's welfare with the relevant people, including Ofsted. Staff have effective relationships with the local police, social workers, the local authority, schools and health professionals. This well-established professional network works together successfully to identify the risks facing young people and takes appropriate action that protects them. The home's sensitive and well-planned work with other partners around the risks of sexual exploitation is helping young people to recover from traumatic experiences and understand the difference between healthy and harmful relationships.

The registered manager and staff's management of risk is successfully balancing the level of concern and the need for protection with providing young people with opportunities to learn through experience and to enjoy appropriate freedoms as other young people. This is helping young people to spend time with their friends and use social media safely. Young people have a better understanding of risk and test out friendships in a safe way. They are recognising when relationships are not in their best interests and take positive action to keep themselves and other young people safe from harm. They are more open with staff and seek staff's advice to check that situations and people, including on social media, are safe. A young person said, 'I have only been missing once, when I had gone to see my boyfriend. I did not tell the staff because I thought I would not be allowed to go. I wish I did not go without telling them. I am now allowed to visit him if this is planned. Staff have met him loads of times and he has been checked by the police and social worker.' Staff keep in regular contact when young people are out and young people rarely go missing. When they have been missing, staff try to find them quickly and work with the police, social workers, friends and families to make sure that they are safe and return home in a timely manner.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager provides consistently effective leadership with a strong focus on making a meaningful difference to young people's lives. She is suitably qualified and a very experienced manager. She sees to it that young people live in a friendly, supportive and safe home, where they receive a high standard of individualised care. As a result of this approach, young people always make progress after they first move in, regardless of the complexity of their needs and challenges presented by their circumstances.

The registered manager's thorough and continuous analysis of the quality of care gives her a detailed understanding of young people's experiences and how well they are being supported to meet their assessed needs. She carefully listens to young people's views about their experiences and works hard to include their views in the development of the home. She has a detailed understanding of the progress each young person is making, the priorities for their care, and ensures that young people are cared for in line with their agreed plans. The registered manager is quick to identify when young people are struggling and takes the necessary action to make sure that they get the best possible

help. For example, the registered manager involves a careers advisor to try to identify suitable opportunities for young people to take part in education, training and employment, and makes sure that young people have received specialist support when they have struggled with drugs, alcohol, and poor emotional health.

The registered manager and the staff have productive and collaborative working relationships with the social workers, teachers, health workers and the police. They work together effectively to try to achieve positive outcomes for young people. The registered manager assertively challenges placing authorities when she sees that young people are not receiving the support that they need to meet their assessed needs. This has included insisting that a placing authority undertakes a new assessment of a young person's needs to identify the support and services that he will require as an adult. The registered manager is also a strong advocate for the plans for young people's futures to be identified at an early stage and to provide plenty of time to prepare young people for adult life.

Visits by an independent person provide detailed and impartial scrutiny of the running of the home. The independent person's reports show young people's progress and experiences and include the views of young people about living in the home. The registered manager always puts into practice the independent person's recommendations for improvements; for example, reviewing the suitability of the location of the home for keeping young people safe. The registered manager's review of the quality of care is informative. This means that she has a realistic understanding of the strengths and is able to set out realistic and achievable plans for the priorities for development for young people, members of staff and the running of the home. She is currently working on providing staff with dedicated time to complete training to build their skills and focus on improving the quality of the written records. However, the review of the quality of care does not clearly show its impact on young people's experiences and outcomes. This is an important element in helping the registered manager understand the effectiveness of staff's practice and measure the difference it is making to young people's lives.

The registered manager has created the right environment for staff to provide young people with a high standard of care and consistency. The staffing arrangements ensure that there are sufficient knowledgeable, experienced, skilful and qualified staff available to meet all the young people's assessed needs. The highly motivated and competent members of staff clearly enjoy spending time with young people and are keen to make a positive difference to young people's lives. Young people are looked after by people they get to know well. They receive the continuity of care that helps them form strong attachments and positive relationships with the people caring for them each day.

Strong staff recruitment, and effective supervision and performance management of staff, protects young people and minimises potential risks to them. New members of staff go through a careful recruitment and selection process that reduces the risk of unsuitable people from working at the home. The registered manager includes young people when recruiting members of staff. She uses their views and observations to make sure that staff have the right personal qualities and values to work with vulnerable young people. She collects all the available information to make the right decisions about a person's suitability. This includes verifying by telephone information

about a person's practice, experiences, abilities, and the reasons they left their last job from their previous employers. Staff have regular opportunities through practice-related supervision to reflect on young people's progress, their own performance, share skills, and develop their skills and knowledge. The registered manager also uses these meetings to challenge staff to develop their practice.

The registered manager supports and encourages staff to develop expertise through good-quality training relevant to the needs of the young people, including child sexual exploitation, behaviour management, teenagers and self-harm, online safety, radicalisation, oppositional defiant disorder, and autistic spectrum disorders. The registered manager encourages and supports staff to develop professionally, including completing the childcare level 3 diploma and management qualifications. New staff complete well-designed and thorough induction programmes that equip them well and assess their suitability to carry out their role. The registered manager's assessment of every member of staff's performance and development would benefit from including the views of young people and other professionals about the member of staff.

The staff partake in regular team meetings to reflect on young people's progress and share important information about their plans and to discuss the running of the home. The forums also provide opportunities for staff to develop their skills and understanding of legislation, policies and procedures. Staff's participation is an important feature in making sure that they understand their roles, support young people consistently and work as a cohesive and effective team. However, only about half of the team attend these meetings, and some members of staff, including night staff, have not taken part at all.

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: SC062674

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Considerate Care Limited

Registered provider address: Millers Accountants, 69 Windsor Road, Prestwich, Manchester M25 0DB

Responsible individual: William Aspinall

Registered manager: Claire Smart

Inspector

Nick Veysey, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

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