

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC062674
Inspector	Marina Tully
Type of inspection	Interim
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	03/12/2014

Inspection date	19/03/2015
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Previous inspection	good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None.

This inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **sustained effectiveness**.

The home continues to provide a good standard of care and protection which enables young people to make continued progress. Staff maintain a nurturing and homely environment which ensures positive relationships thrive within the home. Young people feel well cared for and therefore trust staff. This enables them to take on board staff's guidance and support. Key work records demonstrate that young people are supported to address sensitive issues and explore more appropriate ways of managing difficult emotions. This was also confirmed in discussions with young people during this inspection. A young person said 'staff are there when we need them. We can go to them when we have any issue and they will support us.'

Young people's educational needs are effectively addressed within the home. A young person said she 'loves school' and benefits from additional maths tuition to help improve her grades. When young people withdraw from their college placements, staff support them by liaising with career advisors to explore alternative options. For example, a young person no longer wishes to continue on his current construction course and has shown a keen interest in fixing bikes. His key worker is helping him to explore possible apprenticeships in local bike shops. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of young people's needs and vulnerabilities and standby them when difficulties arise. This persistent and supportive approach helps young people to develop confidence and encourages them to stay on task and to try new things.

On the whole, behaviour management practice is good. Staff work to clear behaviour management plans that are individualised to reflect the needs of each young person. On occasion, inappropriate behaviour management strategies are used, including restricting movement to certain areas of the home. For instance, the kitchen is locked at 21.00 hours every night as a consequence of one young person's behaviour.

Although the manager demonstrated good reason for introducing this measure, it was not incorporated into the individual's behaviour management plan, neither had it been discussed with the placing social worker. Furthermore, it impacts on the other young people living in the home who feel strongly that this is 'unfair.'

Young people's safety is effectively guarded within the home. Young people's risk taking behaviour, including missing from home and self-harming, reduces from the start of their placements. What's more, young people confirm they feel safe. Nevertheless, safety can be further enhanced through improvement in the home's location risk assessment. At present, this does not sufficiently address the potential risks in the surrounding area. Furthermore, it omits other relevant agencies views, such as the local authority, health and youth offending services.

A key strength is staff's effective partnership working with the police, social workers, colleges and local voluntary support services. This is reflected in feedback from a professional who regularly visits the home 'I have been working with the home for a number of years. They were proactive in meeting with our service and exploring the work that we do. They are very compassionate and caring people.'

Improvements have been made in the monitoring of the service. The manager has reviewed the quality assurance system and her monitoring reports now address the required areas and are sent to HMCI in time. Further improvements in the managers monitoring can be achieved by providing more evaluation, as opposed to description, of the quality of the service within these reports.

The core team of staff are stable and those spoken with during this visit confirmed they were settled and felt supported in their role. However, the recommendations from the previous inspection with regards to staff supervision and training have not been adequately addressed. Not all staff are receiving monthly supervision and staff inductions are not fully completed within the company's timescale. Additionally, staff training does not completely reflect the specific needs of young people placed, nor match the service aims and objectives outlined in the home's statement of purpose. Furthermore, the statement of purpose lacks detail on staff working at the home, and clarity on the provision of therapy and children's advocacy.

The home is experiencing difficulties with recruiting suitable staff. This has led to a shortage in staff as vacant posts have not been readily filled. Consequently, some shifts are covered by agency workers as well as overtime by core staff, including the manager. The impact on young people has been minimal as the manager endeavours to use regular agency workers to maintain continuity in care. Two new bank staff are due to join the team once their employment checks are complete, which will address some of the staffing issues. The provider has an ongoing staff recruitment drive to address the challenges in staff recruitment.

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
03/12/2014	Full	good
28/03/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
15/01/2014	Full	adequate
06/03/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress

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
4 (2001)	compile in relation to the children's home a Statement of Purpose which shall consist of a statement as to the matters listed in Schedule 1. Specifically in relation to staffing matters; children's rights and advocacy arrangements; and clarity on how therapy is provided within the home (Regulation 4 (1))	15/04/2015
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal. Specifically training on attachment, autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, e-safety; and, ensuring induction programmes are completed within the agreed period of time. (Regulation 27 (4) (a))	15/04/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home's location promotes children's health, safety and wellbeing and avoids factors such as excessive isolation and areas that present significant risks to children. Specifically in relation the locality risk assessment taking into account the physical environment and the views of other relevant stakeholders (NMS 10.2)
- ensure physical restrictions on normal movement within or from the home are not used unless this is necessary to safeguard children and promote their welfare and development. Such measures are only used where agreed with the responsible authority, and, if appropriate, the parents. Such restrictions for one child do not impose similar restrictions on other children. Specifically in relation to locking the kitchen (NMS 10.4)
- ensure there are clear and effective procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the home. Specifically in relation to the registered person's monitoring reports providing an evaluation of the quality of care within the home. (NMS 21.1)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

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.