

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	21 June 2016
Unique reference number	SC062674
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	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

Inspection date	21 June 2016
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 and supportive children's home that is making a positive and significant difference to their lives. They have strong and trusting relationships with staff and they know that staff are on their side and want what is best for them. This strong sense of emotional security is key to the excellent progress that they are making in all areas of their development.
- Young people often make remarkable progress in education. The love, structure, support, encouragement and opportunities that they receive help them to overcome problems and improve their lives.
- A thorough understanding of the risks that individual young people face and very effectively partnerships with other agencies reduces risk, including those associated with child sexual exploitation and emotional distress.
- The manager and staff engage exceptionally well with partner services to ensure that 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 that they need to help them.
- The home is effectively managed in the best interests of the young people. The staff are highly skilled, resilient and are committed to supporting the young people to improve their opportunities and outcomes. Leaders and managers use thorough monitoring systems to understand how effectively they are promoting young people's welfare and meeting their needs. They use this information to prioritise and secure improvements in the quality of care.
- Currently, the home has enough suitable staff to only effectively look after the one young person living there. There are times when this young person does not have daily contact with female staff. The registered manager is taking reasonable steps to address these issues, but needs to develop a systematic workforce plan to show how she is able to deliver the services set out in the statement of purpose.

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation. (Regulation 40 (4)(a))	22 June 2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that the home's records on each child represent a significant contribution to their life history. In particular, children's records provide a full account of children's experiences and progress, the support and guidance that they receive, the staff's assessment of their progress and the support required to meet their needs and promote their development ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5).
- Ensure that 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 regularly, for example in their monthly reports and care plans ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.19).
- Develop a plan that shows how the workforce is able to deliver the aims and objectives of the home's statement of purpose. The plan should detail: the necessary management and staffing structure, the experience and qualifications of the staff working within the staffing structure and any further training required for those staff; the processes and agreed timetables for staff to achieve induction, probation and any core training and mandatory qualifications; the processes for managing and improving poor performance; and the processes and timescales for supervision of practice

and keep appropriate records in the home ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8).

- Ensure that where only one member of staff is on duty at any one time, the registered manager makes a formal assessment of the implications for children's care. This assessment should be recorded and available for inspection by Ofsted and placing authorities ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.18).
- Ensure that, whenever possible, staff in day-to-day contact with children should include staff from the different gender groups ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.22).
- Review the suitability of the location and premises in the 'Safe Area Report' to identify any risks associated with the home's proximity to a motorway and the strategies for managing these risks ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1).

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
23 February 2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
10 November 2015	Full	Good
19 March 2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
3 December 2014	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people live in a warm, nurturing and supportive family home. They receive a very high quality of care from compassionate and skilled staff. The consistent and personalised support has brought stability to young people's lives, which has helped them to form secure attachments, feel safe and make significant and sustained progress across all aspects of their development. Young people are happier, safer, achieving in education, healthier, enjoying positive relationships with other young people and adults, taking part in enjoyable activities and managing their feelings more constructively. They also now have positive plans and aspirations for the future. A young person said, 'I have been very happy living here. I have progressed so much. I have grown in confidence and my self-esteem is much better.' Her social worker added, 'The progress she has made since moving in is remarkable. She would not be in the place she is now if it wasn't for the staff and manager.' Young people are proud of their home. It is a pleasant family home, which is decorated and maintained to a good standard. The registered manager and the staff are highly skilled in forming meaningful relationships with vulnerable young people. They treat young people with honesty and respect, which has enabled them to enjoy positive and trusting relationships with young people. Young people know that staff care about them and will always fight for what is in their best interests and get the best possible support and opportunities, as every good parent would. The staff quickly made positive relationships with a young person who only lived in the home for a short time. This young person's social worker said, 'The consistent staff team helped her to seem settled and she was starting to open up to them about her feelings. Her school saw a massive positive difference in her in a couple of weeks of moving in.' The registered manager and staff listen to young people's views, wishes and feelings and always take them into account. Young people are involved in every decision about their lives and the running of the home. This is completed as a natural part of young people's daily lives. They can talk to staff at any time and staff are interested in their ideas and opinions. Young people make decisions about the food that they eat, the clothes that they wear, how they spend their spare time, how their home is decorated, where they go to college and where they live in the future and the support that they will need. The staff are very good at helping young people to think about the implications of their decisions and what is the best for them. They also take young people's complaints seriously. They took effective action when a young person raised an issue about another young person's disruptive behaviour when she was trying to study and get a good night's sleep. The registered manager and staff fully take into account the particular needs of	

young people living a long way from their family home. Staff help young people to maintain important links with their family and ensure that they see their families frequently. The registered manager also made sure that these young people have access to local education and health services that meet their assessed needs.

The registered manager and staff provide structure, stability, encouragement and opportunities for young people to take part in education and to learn and develop their knowledge and skills. A young person has done exceptionally well at school. She is very motivated to learn, attended every day, worked hard and is on track to achieve at least five A to C grades in her GCSEs. She knows that she wants to work with horses and has secured a place at college to do a BTEC National Diploma in equine studies. She said, 'I was not in full-time education prior to coming here and was not planning on doing any GCSEs. Now I have just finished my GCSEs and I did my best, attended extra revision sessions at school and should get fairly good grades.' The staff provided the young person with a calm atmosphere to help her revise and be well prepared for her exams. They also helped her to start horse riding again, which has developed her talents and allowed her to follow her ambitions. They accompanied her to interviews at colleges and are extremely proud that she has been offered places at each college where she applied.

The registered manager and staff have strong working relationships with schools and training providers that effectively promote young people's learning and tackle any barriers to their participation in education. The staff's positive attitude towards education has helped to improve young people's attendance, progress and attainment. Another young person's school attendance has improved significantly from less than 50% to 90% since she moved in. She has made excellent progress to move to level 1 in functional skills and has achieved several Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network qualifications. She became increasingly motivated and asked for additional support in English and mathematics. Her teacher said, 'The excellent level of support and communication from the staff has helped her make so much progress. She appeared to be happy, engaging with her work, joining in with activities and achieving academically.'

Young people live in a healthy environment where staff actively promote their physical health and emotional well-being. They enjoy very healthy and varied diets and get plenty of physical exercise. The staff provide young people with good advice about sexual health and relationships, drugs, alcohol and smoking, which is helping them to understand the importance of healthy lifestyles. Some young people, as a result, have changed their behaviour and no longer use alcohol. They have access to community and specialist health services, including counselling and drug and alcohol services. Staff have an excellent understanding of young people's specific health needs and manage their health with sensitivity and confidence. They closely monitor young people to make sure that they are healthy, supporting them to attend routine health checks. They also ensure that the young people always get suitable medical advice and treatment when they are feeling unwell or they are concerned about their health. Young people also take more responsibility for their health by arranging their own appointments and managing their own

medication safely.

Young people get the right support and guidance to help them develop their life skills and prepare for moving into their own accommodation. Staff ensure that young people are fully involved in the planning for their futures. Young people have developed practical life skills, including shopping, cooking and managing money. Staff have recently helped a young person successfully move into his own flat. They supported him to find the flat, furnish and decorate it and to sort out the utilities and his entitlements to benefits. Staff also recognise that this has been a stressful time for him and continue to support him emotionally and practically. This continuous support is helping him to build his confidence and knowledge and find his feet. Staff are also working effectively with another young person and the placing authority to support her to move out over the next few months.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The registered manager and staff's strong safeguarding practices ensure that young people feel emotionally secure and that they are protected from harm. They give young people's safety the highest priority. They are vigilant and inquisitive and know when something is wrong by noticing changes in young people's health, mood and usual behaviour. They have the knowledge and skills to recognise the signs of abuse, neglect and child sexual exploitation, and act decisively to report serious concerns. They work extremely effectively with social workers, the police and health and education services to understand the risks to individual young people and to manage and reduce these risks. The local police child sexual exploitation coordinator said, 'The staff have an excellent understanding of the risks, report their concerns quickly and take every action possible to protect the young person, including keeping in touch with her by telephone, going out to look for her, contacting her friends.' Staff also provide the police with the information that they need to help to find young people quickly, including what he or she was wearing when they were seen last. The staff always welcome young people home, check their welfare and ensure that they have the chance to speak to someone independent of the home to help understand the reasons and reduce the risks of going missing again. The staff provide young people with good advice about personal safety. Staff support young people to understand what makes healthy and secure relationships. Staff get to know young people's friends and their families and recognise when young people are involved in exploitative or damaging friendships. Staff take suitable action to discourage and manage potentially harmful relationships. For example, working with other young people's parents and carers to know where they are spending time, checking on them and providing lifts to make sure that they are going where they say that they are and that they are picked up safely.	

The registered manager and staff have taken appropriate action when a young person was frequently going missing and at risk of child sexual exploitation and violence from adults. In consultation with the placing authority and the police, staff developed an effective plan for managing the risks and to protect this young person from harm. However, the registered manager did not inform Ofsted that the young person was at serious risk of child sexual exploitation.

Overall, the young people who have lived at the home since the last inspection have become increasingly safe. They are protected from aggression and bullying. Their emotional well-being and resilience have improved as they develop skills to manage their feelings constructively. As a result, they no longer use self-harm or aggressive behaviour to cope with strong emotions and difficult situations.

The registered manager and staff have created an open and trusting environment where young people feel able to talk about their lives, feelings, frustrations, concerns and confusions. They are always available to young people. Young people know that the staff will always listen to their concerns, take them seriously, want to help them and give them good advice. The staff's excellent communication and interpersonal skills help young people to learn to trust adults; to feel safe enough to talk about their feelings about wanting to make changes and ask for and accept help. They have effectively supported a young person to engage productively with education, health and youth justice services to improve her opportunities and deal with harmful behaviour including child sexual exploitation, aggression and drug and alcohol misuse.

The registered manager and staff show considerable insight into individual young people's worries and how these affect their behaviour. They provide young people with the level of structure and routine that 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 has helped young people to feel less anxious and manage their feelings and behaviour more safely. Staff help young people to try to find a solution to the immediate problem and the underlying reason. Staff calmly and assertively challenge unacceptable behaviour and help young people to understand about socially acceptable behaviour, while giving them the opportunity to feel calm and work through their worries. Staff are skilled at identifying the right support for young people at the right time. When a young person was unable to access counselling straightaway, staff found another service that could provide her with the help that she needed around her experiences and bereavement. They also felt that the activity-based approach of this service would better suit her needs and help her to engage with the support available.

The staff are good at helping young people to understand how to build positive and sustainable relationships with other young people. A young person said, 'I had no real friends where I lived before and now have a number of really good friends.' Staff also help young people to learn the skills to sort out disagreements with other young people and still remain friends. Young people have the same opportunities as other young people to spend time with their friends in the community and their

friends often visit them at home.

The registered manager and staff have a detailed understanding of the local area. They work effectively with their neighbours, community police officer and the local authority to understand the benefits and risks of the home's location for young people and follow clear protective measures that help to reduce risks. However, they have not fully considered the potential risks of the home's proximity to a busy motorway to young people's safety.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager has a suitable professional qualification and considerable experience of working with young people and leading this children's home. She ensures that the home runs effectively and consistently 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. Young people, regardless of the complexity of their needs and challenges presented by their circumstances, invariably make significant progress across all areas of their development after they move in. The registered manager and staff have strong working relationships with young people's families, social workers, personal advisers, independent reviewing officers, the police, schools, therapists and health workers. They work together effectively to ensure that young people receive the best possible support to meet their needs. The registered manager ensures that the other people involved in young people's lives are kept up to date. A social worker said, 'There is an excellent level of communication from the staff.' The registered manager actively chases up information that she needs from social workers and agencies, such as details of young people's backgrounds and minutes from planning meetings, to help her and the staff to understand young people's needs, how best to support them and ensure that they are following the agreed plans. She also challenges other agencies and local authorities when she feels that a young person is not receiving the support and services that they require and takes reasonable actions to raise her concerns with the relevant people to improve the situation. For example, she successfully challenged a placing authority to ensure a personal adviser was available to help a young person get ready for adult life and to ensure that the arrangements for finding him a suitable place to live were not delayed. The registered manager and staff work together cohesively to create a supportive and consistent home environment that promotes young people's development. The staff are appropriately guided, supported and supervised by the registered manager. They use monthly team meetings to reflect on young people's progress and experience and share information and ideas about how best to meet young people's needs and manage their safety.	

The home has sufficient experienced and qualified staff to promote the safety and meet the needs of the young person currently living there. Since the last inspection, a number of permanent staff have left the home and there are now not enough staff available to provide the appropriate level of support for any more than one young person. This means, at present, that the home is unable to fulfil its statement of purpose to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people. The reduction in staff numbers has coincided with two young people moving on. The registered manager has managed these changes effectively to promote the continuity of care for the remaining young person and limit the disruption to her life.

Apart from the registered manager, there are no female staff currently working permanently at the home. This means that the young person does not always have contact with female staff daily, especially at weekends. The young person said, 'I feel able to talk to the male members of staff. It's OK with the male staff, but there should be more female staff as soon as possible. I feel more able to talk to them as they listen more than male staff and give me advice.' The registered manager is actively recruiting new staff, in particular suitable female staff, to work at the home. She has already provisionally appointed a female member of staff, who will start work as soon as the remaining recruitment checks have been completed. The young person was involved in interviewing this person and said that 'she is very nice'.

The registered manager has given assurances that she would not agree to any other young people moving in unless she has sufficient suitable staff available to promote their welfare. However, she does not have a detailed workforce plan that shows how she will be able to fully deliver the services set out in the statement of purpose including details of the necessary management and staffing structure, the required training, experience and qualifications of the staff or timetables for recruiting and the induction of staff.

In addition, there are times when there is only one member of staff on duty supporting the young person. Given the age and specific needs of the young person this appears to be a safe and suitable arrangement. However, the registered manager has not made a formal written assessment of the potential risks and implications for the young person's care.

The registered manager and provider use effective systems to monitor and review the home's effectiveness in meeting young people's needs and promoting their safety. As a result, they have a detailed and realistic understanding of the home's strengths and actively work towards improving the quality of care that they provide for young people. An independent person now visits the home every month and provides an impartial and thorough assessment of the arrangements for safeguarding and promoting young people's welfare. The independent person evaluates the quality of staff's direct work with young people to meet their assessed needs and seeks the views of the young people, parent and social workers to help her reach her assessment. She draws reasonable conclusions about the home based on her findings and makes suitable recommendations to

improve the quality of care. The registered manager puts these recommendations into practice, including making sure that fire evacuation drills take place regularly and that young people have opportunities to meet as a group to share their views and suggestions for the running of the home and their care.

The registered manager has completed a thorough and informative review of the quality of care. It accurately measures young people's progress and experiences and the impact that living in the home is having on their lives and development. She has used this information to identify and achieve goals for individual young people and staff. This has included successfully supporting a young person's move into his own accommodation, supporting another young person to complete her secondary education and get into college and improving a young person's participation in education and with support services. The house has been decorated to improve the quality of the accommodation. Staff now have a range of up-to-date resources to use in their work with young people around healthy lifestyles, relationships and the safe use of the internet and social media. The registered manager has also identified key areas for further development in relation to the recruitment, induction and training of suitable people to work at the home, preparing and supporting the young person living in the home to move out to live more independently and start college and improve the quality of the written records.

The quality of the young people's records continues to improve, but they still do not always provide a detailed picture of young people's lives to make an important contribution to the understanding of their lives. Young people's daily records do not consistently provide a full account of their experiences and progress, the support and guidance that they receive, the staff's assessment of their progress and the support required to meet their needs and promote their development. Young people now have the opportunity to read their monthly progress reports. A young person said, 'The reports are really good and give a clear summary of what [has] been happening for me.' However, these reports still do not include young people's views about what they think is going well, what has not gone well, what they want to change and the support that they feel they need to help them. This continues to be a missed opportunity to help young people have their say and reflect on their experiences 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 that 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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