

SC063219

Registered provider: Children Assisted in a Real Environment (CARE Ltd)

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

- The home provides care for up to five children.
- In their statement of purpose, the provider states that they provide care for children who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- The registered manager has been in post since February 2013.
- The registered manager manages this and another of the provider's three homes.

Inspection dates: 29 to 30 August 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 15 November 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/11/2017	Full	Good
13/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
24/05/2016	Full	Good
10/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— - employ an individual to work at the children's home; or - if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— - the individual is of integrity and good character; - the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; - the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1)(2)(a)(b)(3)(a)(b)(c)(d)) Specifically, obtain an explanation of any gap in employment and include declaration of convictions and whether the disclosure and barring check is enhanced and if the results of the check are satisfactory.	01/11/2018
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— - maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; - ensure that the records are kept up to date; and retain the records for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry. Specifically, ensure that staff and the manager sign crucial	01/11/2018

records to evidence they have read updated information. (Regulation 37 (2)(a) Schedule 4 (2)(d))	
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report"). The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home. The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c)(3)(4)(a)(b)(5)) Specifically, gather the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff as part of the review and include more factual reporting.	01/11/2018
The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44 (1)(2)(a)(b)(3)(4)(a)(b)(5)) Specifically, follow through on the recommendation to improve	01/11/2018

the time taken to fulfil fire drills in order to safeguard children in the event of a real fire.	
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(d)) Specifically, ensure that the premises are maintained safely regarding the worn stair carpet, which presents a trip hazard in one place, review lighting on the staircase, attend to the broken seat in the garden and replace missing fence panels.	01/11/2018
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(b)) Specifically, prevent children from having inappropriate relationships and protect them from undue influence of other residents, encourage them to improve ways to keep themselves safe and reduce risks associated with the use of illicit substances on their health and safety.	01/11/2018

Recommendations

- Ensure that for children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9) Specifically, review how staff display information, and make sure small repairs, maintenance and the replacement of broken furniture are done speedily to ensure that the building remains homely in all areas.
- Ensure that as part of reviewing and revising where appropriate the statement of purpose (regulation 16(3)(a)), the registered person should review and update the children's guide as necessary, and make sure children are given an

explanation of any changes. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.23) Specifically, make sure that this is easy and clear for children to understand, that rules reflect practice about children entering others' bedrooms, that the explanation of sexuality includes all identities, and that the guide includes more examples of restorative justice.

- Ensure that staff help each child to prepare for any moves from the home, whether they are returning home, moving to another placement or adult care, or moving to live independently. This includes supporting the child to develop emotional and mental resilience to cope without the home's support and, where the child is moving to live independently, practical skills such as cooking, housework, budgeting and personal self-care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27)
- Ensure that any sanctions used to address poor behaviour are restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. In some cases, it will be important for children to make reparation in some form to anyone hurt by their behaviour, and the staff in the home should be skilled to support the child to understand this and carry it out. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38) Specifically, help children to develop empathy for and understanding of others.
- Ensure the registered person has a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce-related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should:
 - detail the necessary management and staffing structure, (including any staff commissioned to provide health and education), the experience and qualifications of staff currently working within the staffing structure and any further training required for those staff, to enable the delivery of the home's statement of purpose
 - detail the processes and agreed timescales for staff to achieve induction, probation and any core training (such as safeguarding, health and safety and mandatory qualifications)
 - detail the process for managing and improving poor performance
 - detail the process and timescales for supervision of practice (see regulation 33 (4) (b)) and keep appropriate records for staff in the home.

The registered manager should update the plan to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home, and use this to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of staff – including the home's manager. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

The home has experienced an unsettled period. New admissions have changed the dynamics of the home. At one time, it appeared that children were uniting against the staff, who were trying to manage some very challenging situations and destructive behaviour. Relationships between the children have also been negative at times.

The registered manager has made clear to children her concern about behaviours, such as disturbing neighbours, returning under the influence of illegal substances and refusing to settle at night. Staff report some improvement recently, following the ending of one child's placement. However, another child's behaviour continues to decline and they continue to place themselves at risk.

Staff have found it difficult to engage all of the children. For example, there is little take-up in key-work, one-to-one sessions or residents' meetings. Therefore, opportunities are lost for children to reflect on their behaviour and issues and find a way to progress. However, some children interact positively with staff on a casual basis and feel 'they try to help with stuff'.

When children have engaged, staff have tried to do activities, such as cooking, to help them get ready for independent living. However, one child who left the home struggles with the realities of living semi-independently. The registered manager plans to improve the independence programme so that children have a successful transition when they leave. Some children benefit from staying in touch with staff after they move on, returning for support and to share a meal.

Staff offer activities but children tend to do things outside of the home. Some children bring friends to the home and enjoy spending time with them there. Staff like to give children the experience of a holiday. However, this could not take place this year due to the challenging behaviour in the home.

Health outcomes vary. Despite staff encouragement, children sometimes refuse to attend routine appointments, and in some cases lose their registration with health services as a result. The use of alcohol, tobacco and illicit substances places some children's health at risk. However, recently some children have been willing to engage with support services which the manager has invited into the home.

Educational progress and achievement vary. In some cases, providers have ended children's courses or excluded them due to challenging behaviour, which affects children's potential to achieve. However, recently some children have made progress in securing and starting new placements. Some children have managed to obtain a few qualifications.

There has been some damage to the building, plus the usual wear and tear. Maintenance has not been conducted with sufficient speed to keep the building to a high standard and homely in all areas for children.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Some children have gone missing from the home, sometimes returning under the influence of illegal substances. Incidents of going missing have reduced recently. Police describe the staff as working well with them to reduce one child's high number of missing incidents and as having 'a clear understanding of missing'.

Staff have tried to give guidance to children on consent and appropriate relationships. However, they have not been successful in preventing one child's involvement in an inappropriate relationship in the home.

Staff are trained in restraint techniques but have not used restraint this year. Staff use de-escalation techniques, but there has been some police involvement as a result of incidents in the home. Staff give children sanctions as part of behaviour management. However, there is scope for more effective use of restorative justice to help children really understand the impact their behaviour may have on others and to develop empathy.

The recruitment of staff is reasonable, with references taken up and verified and checks with the disclosure and barring service obtained. However, in one file there is no account of gaps in employment nor a declaration of offences. A new initiative now considers children's views about prospective staff, involving them in the recruitment process.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Staff report that their induction and training are useful, with the majority achieving level 3 qualifications. However, a workforce development plan is not yet in place. A youth justice worker described 'professional communication' with the established staff team.

Monitoring by an independent visitor is useful to the management team. The visitor makes useful suggestions, but management has not met one recommendation regarding improving the time taken to perform fire drills. This could present risk in the event of a real fire. Internal monitoring reports would benefit from more factual reporting and from including the opinions of children and others associated with the service.

Staff and the manager have a consistent approach so that children know they will get the same response from all staff. Staff are reluctant to give up on children. A social worker said they were 'grateful management didn't end the placement' when a child was particularly challenging to staff. They have persisted in trying to engage children and help them to make progress.

Record-keeping is reasonable. Staff have not signed a few documents to evidence that they are aware of changes in children's plans. The children's guide requires review so that children get clear information about staff's expectations and the current rules of the home.

The manager also manages another of the provider's homes and has been involved in establishing a third home. She now provides a timetable so staff are clear about when she will be present in this home. Staff feel supported and valued. One member of staff described belonging to 'a strong, resilient staff team who work together effectively'.

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: SC063219

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Children Assisted in a Real Environment (CARE Ltd)

Registered provider address: 144 Old Oak Road, London W3 7HF

Responsible individual: Linda Blakely

Registered manager: Natasha Robinson

Inspector

Jacqueline Graves, social care regulatory inspector

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