

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	1 June 2016
Unique reference number	SC063895
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Castle Homes Care Ltd
Registered provider address	80 Hammersmith Road, London W14 8UD

Responsible individual	Julie Wallhead
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Tracy Murty

Inspection date	1 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

SC063895

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people present as being happy and settled in this home. They have formed positive and meaningful relationships with staff and managers. They have increased in confidence, and there has been a noticeable reduction in concerning behaviours.
- Young people benefit from being cared for by a team of staff who have their best interests at the centre of all their practice. Staff know the young people well, and take pride in their achievements and progress. This enables young people to sustain positive relationships with known and trusted adults, and leads to increased emotional security and stability.
- Staff understand the complex needs of the young people and respond well to them at all times. Staff benefit from detailed induction programmes when they start working in the home, and a wide range of training and development opportunities. They work closely and proactively with all involved agencies and professionals. This keeps young people safe and protected from actual or potential harm.
- Staff know and understand the young people well, in relation to their behaviours. They form positive relationships with young people and are able to de-escalate any concerning or risky behaviours very well. Consequently, incidents of challenging behaviours are reduced.
- Young people feel fully involved in all aspects of the care and support that they receive from the staff and managers. They contribute to all aspects of how the home is run, and influence such things as the internal and exterior decor, menu planning and activities. They have been included in contributing to the home's development plan, and their views, wishes and feelings are regularly sought.
- The use of door alarms requires consideration and review, in order to ensure that the alarms are only used when there is a clear need. Recording of allegations has not been consistently clear, detailed and robust. Placement plans do not currently provide clear targets for young people or a sense as to how they will or have been achieved. Young people should be regularly offered an opportunity to read and consider all records held about them, and to comment on their content. For those young people who refuse to engage in structured independence planning work, staff and managers need to record more clearly the skills and areas of need. There has been no adverse impact on the experiences and progress of young people, which are good.

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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
7. The children's views, wishes and feelings standard (2) In order to meet the children's views, wishes and feelings standard, the registered person should— (a) ensure that staff— (v) help each child to understand how their privacy will be respected and the circumstances when it may have to be limited (Regulation 7(2)(v)).	15 July 2016
In the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect, that the registered person must— (d) provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response; (e) describe the measures which may be necessary to protect children following an allegation of abuse or neglect (Regulation 34(2)(d)(e)).	15 July 2016
13. The leadership and management standard (2) In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person should— (f) understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home (Regulation 13(2)(f)).	15 July 2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that each child is helped to prepare for any moves from the home. This is with specific reference to ensuring that work is completed for those young people moving to live independently ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27).
- Ensure that children are actively encouraged to read their records and to add further information to them. They should be regularly reminded of their rights to see information kept about them and be given information about how they might be supported to access their records in later life ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.6).

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately operated home provides care and accommodation for up to four young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27 January 2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
2 June 2015	Full	Outstanding
19 February 2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
3 December 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 present as being happy and settled living in this home. They like the staff and managers, and have formed very trusting and positive relationships with them. Placement stability is very good, leading to young people's emotional well-being increasing. Feedback from placing authorities and family members reflects this, with one family member commenting: 'He is a totally different person to when he moved in. This is due to the care and support that he has received. I cannot speak highly enough of the staff and managers.' Young people learn to manage their own concerning behaviours, confident in the support available to them at all times by the staff and managers. From their starting points, young people develop in confidence and emotional security. As one young person, who has lived in the home for several years, said: 'This home is great, the best place I have ever lived. The staff have all helped me so much and I will be sad to leave.' Young people have a wide range of activities to take part in. These include swimming, cinema trips and ice-skating. One young person has taken on the role of events coordinator for the home. Regular and fun events have taken place in the home that involve both young people and staff. This further reflects the full engagement and inclusion of the young people in all aspects of how the home is run. Young people feel settled and secure in this home. For some, this is the longest placement they have ever had. This is a reflection of the commitment of staff and managers to considering and being able to meet their complex needs. Staff fully support young people to make progress in all areas of their lives and prepare them well for their eventual move to independence. This includes supporting them to visit new accommodation, and facilitating a smooth and well-planned transition to adult services. For those young people who refuse to engage in structured independence planning work, staff should consider how they record the known skills and areas of need for each relevant young person. This would provide useful information for both young people and the adult service accommodation providers when young people leave this home. From their starting points, young people make good progress in relation to their education. Staff and managers work tirelessly with education providers and placing authorities to ensure that young people have the most appropriate provisions in place. Some young people have been reintegrated back into mainstream education after a long period of alternative provision. For others, their educational	

achievements have exceeded what was predicted. As one family member commented: 'They have done so much better than we thought they could before they moved to this home. They have got into college and have aspirations for their future now, which we never thought possible before.'

Young people receive excellent care and support in relation to their health needs. Staff ensure that they have the most appropriate support in place to meet their complex emotional and psychological needs, as well as their routine healthcare needs. Young people have access to counselling services, with staff fully supporting their attendance. Local child and adolescent mental health services also provide regular consultation and guidance to staff and managers. This has involved the education provider for one young person attending consultation meetings. This reflects the total commitment of staff and managers not only to meeting the needs of young people, but to working in partnership with other agencies. This provides continuity of care and support to young people, which is crucial to ensure that their emotional well-being is promoted.

Young people enjoy regular and positive contact with family and friends, in line with agreed contact arrangements with their placing authorities. Staff fully support such arrangements by providing transport, supervision and emotional support to young people. Staff demonstrate a detailed awareness of the family histories of the young people placed and a real sensitivity to ensuring that they have positive and meaningful contact. Where appropriate, family members are welcome to visit the home. One relative stated: 'I am always invited to attend meetings and have been made very welcome when I have come to the home, with meals being provided. It is a lovely home and staff make me feel really welcome.'

Young people know how to make a complaint and feel confident in being able to share any concerns that they may have with staff and managers. Information is provided to them, in the form of a guide, upon admission to the home. This has details of the complaints procedure and agencies that they can contact for support. Staff actively promote the use of independent advocates, with several young people having such support in place. Any complaints made are responded to promptly by the manager, with young people being clearly advised of the actions taken. Detailed feedback is also provided to young people by the manager, following regular young people's meetings. This further evidences how much staff and managers consider the views, wishes and feelings of young people.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people feel safe living in this home, which is supported by effective and competent staff practice. Staff display a commendable and detailed awareness and understanding of young people's vulnerabilities, and respond well to them.	

Managers attend regular meetings with the local police to discuss and consider any issues or concerns and to improve practice. Detailed information and risk assessments are provided to the police when young people move into the home. As one police officer commented: 'The staff and managers respond well to any missing from care incidents and take all necessary action. They work well with us and we have no concerns currently about this home or how they safeguard young people.' Young people understand their risk assessments and clearly feel that staff have their best interests at heart, with one stating: 'I would never leave this home because it's an amazing place, the best place I have moved to since I have been in care. I think it is the best place to be.'

Staff support young people to consider any concerning or risky behaviours, with noticeable improvements evident for all since they moved to live at this home. A family member of one young person, who has lived in this home for several years, stated: 'They are a totally different person. Behaviours have improved significantly and there are seldom any incidents now. They feel safe and, as a family, we know that staff keep them safe and help them in all areas.' Specialist support is commissioned and sourced for young people to consider their complex emotional needs. This includes counselling and consultation with mental health services. Over time, this has led to improvements for young people in relation to missing from care incidents and a reduction in the use of physical restraint.

Positive behaviour is encouraged and supported by detailed behaviour management plans. Young people learn how to manage their own behaviours and emotions better, fully supported by staff and managers. As one placing authority worker commented: 'He is a totally different young person to the one who moved in, and now has a positive and promising future ahead of him. The progress he has made is amazing.'

Monitoring of young people includes the use of bedroom door alarms during the night. Such use is subject to risk assessments and regular reviews. Placing authorities and parents/carers have given consent to its use. For some older young people, the use of such monitoring and surveillance techniques needs to be subject to closer scrutiny and review. This is in order to ensure that their privacy is respected and that use of such measures reflects their current and presenting risks.

Recruitment and selection processes for staff are robust and prevent unsuitable adults from working with vulnerable young people in this home. Staff present as confident and competent in relation to procedures for reporting any safeguarding concerns that they may have. Regular contact with the local authority designated officer takes place in relation to any allegations about staff members. Records of such allegations have not been consistently clear and detailed. Managers have taken prompt action, but records for one allegation did not provide a clear sense of the internal investigation conducted or its outcome. There has been no adverse impact on any young person as a result of this shortfall.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The manager of the home came into post earlier this year. She has several years' experience of working in similar settings, and has the skills and qualifications necessary for the role. She has made an application to Ofsted and is awaiting her interview to be approved as the registered manager of this home. In a relatively short period of time, it is apparent that she has begun to implement changes to improve several areas of how the home is run. An example of this relates to the development plan for the home. The manager has discussed this with staff and young people, and made changes to it. This now includes a suggestion made by young people about being involved in a charity fundraising event this year. This reflects a manager who is keen to involve staff and young people in all aspects of how the home is run. Consultation has also been sought since she came into post with young people, placing authorities and family members. Again, this reflects her desire to include stakeholders and family members, and in fully considering and acting on their responses. Staffing levels are good and reflect the needs of the young people placed. Staff receive regular and good-quality supervision and annual appraisals. They benefit from a clear and detailed induction programme and a wide range of training and development opportunities. One new member of staff commented: 'I have never worked in this kind of setting before. My induction has been excellent, as well as the training. I feel really well supported and confident in my role.' There is positive evidence of close and positive partnership working at this home. Managers and staff fully engage with a range of agencies and professionals in order to meet the holistic needs of young people. These include health, police, education providers and placing authorities. Staff and managers chase placing authorities for missing information and ensure that key documentation is in place on each young person's records. The manager has formed a very close working relationship with one school and regularly attends meetings with the headteacher and mental health services to discuss the needs and progress of one young person. This reflects the commitment of the staff and managers to ensuring that there is a consistency of care and approach to young people across a range of settings. The manager and deputy manager have recently attended training on radicalisation from the local police, and now intend to provide this for all staff. Staff receive training on sexual exploitation, safeguarding, behaviour management and a range of other relevant courses throughout the year. Staff feel very well supported by managers in this home and work as a team to provide consistent care to young people. Each young person has a key worker who undertakes direct work with them on a regular basis. This enables young people to consider any specific issues or needs that they may have in a structured manner. One member of staff has	

recently put together a pack on sexual health. This is full of valuable information for young people, who can access it without recourse to the staff. This further demonstrates that they are a team of staff who are motivated in their roles and committed to ensuring that young people receive the support and care that they need at all times. Some engage with staff in life story work. This provides them with a valuable means of exploring and better understanding their backgrounds.

Young people contribute to their own placement plans, which are written in a very young person-friendly style. They read and sign some key documentation about them, but this is not consistent. There is a need for staff and managers to provide young people regularly with opportunities to read and consider all relevant records relating to them. This would enable them to have a fuller understanding of the care and support being provided, and to make and record comments.

The home has a detailed statement of purpose and development plan in place. The new manager has reviewed both documents, and has involved staff and young people in this process. This reflects the learning ethos of the manager and her desire to include staff and young people in all aspects of how the home is run.

The home is presented to a good standard, both internally and externally. Young people have recently contributed to decisions on the redecoration of the main bathroom. Their rooms are highly personalised to reflect their interests and likes.

Management monitoring of the quality of care provided does not currently provide a clear sense of the targets or desired outcomes for young people, or an understanding of how they are being achieved or met. A young person's version of the placement plan is in place, which young people consider and make comments on. This document, again, does not specify what the agreed targets or desired outcomes are. Incentive charts for young people set out specified areas for them to achieve incentive payments, but these do not link with the placement plan desired outcomes or targets. Neither do the incentive charts clearly reflect what young people have achieved. An example of this relates to their engagement in education. The staff record crosses and ticks to state if they have engaged, but there is no clarification or analysis of this information. Young people are clearly making good progress in all areas of their lives, but current management monitoring and recording systems do not provide details of the impact that the quality of the care provided is having on their individual progress and experience. This shortfall was highlighted as a recommendation at the last inspection and has been raised as a requirement at this inspection.

Three recommendations were made as a result of the last inspection. Records of any incidents of young people self-harming have now been improved and provide a much clearer monitoring tool for managers. The bathroom and shower room have been redecorated and had minor repair works. The recommendation on young peoples' care plans has not been met and a requirement has been made to address this.

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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
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