

Children's home – Interim inspection

Inspection date	16/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC065780
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Milestones Care Homes Limited
Registered provider address	32 Fieldway, Maghull, Liverpool L31 5NB

Responsible individual	Mark Armstrong
Registered manager	Nina Howarth
Inspector	Marina Tully

Inspection date	16/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. Young people continue to receive commendable care and guidance from a skilled and dedicated team. This is reflected in a young person's comments, 'Whenever I need help and support staff are always there to talk to. I get excellent support.' A social worker's feedback confirms this also, 'You look after him so well, he really is enjoying life since he has been with you all. Thanks again for making him happy.' A key strength of the home is staff's commitment to partnership working. Staff work proactively with a range of professionals to ensure that young people receive the help and support that they require. An example of exceptional practice is the recent appointment of a personal trainer to provide young people with guidance on nutrition and fitness. Young people's health is clearly a priority and is creatively addressed by the team. Staff attend to young people's specific medical needs, including ensuring that they attend routine health appointments and administer medication safely. However, medication records do not fully adhere to medically approved guidance, in particular the recording of controlled medication. The manager acknowledged this recording shortfall and indicated that the Regulation 44 visitor has raised this as an area for development. So far, this has not affected young people's health or safety; however, it has the potential to do so. All young people are engaging with education or training, which is tailored around their individual needs. Staff improve young people's engagement by putting effective incentives in place, such as opportunities to have hair and beauty sessions as treats. This has supported a young person to complete an employability course successfully and, thus, placed her in a better position to apply for a job or apprenticeship. When young people struggle at school, staff work closely with their teachers to arrange additional support. Because of effective partnership working with schools and social workers, young people are receiving additional tuition and, therefore, making progress. The home has a clear missing from care policy in place that staff follow consistently. When young people go missing, staff take swift and appropriate action and, as a result, young people are quickly located and return home unharmed. Staff invest time in reflecting on all risky behaviours with young people. This was observed in the key work records that cover a range of topics, including safer	

relationships, missing from care and the detrimental effects of drug and alcohol use. Although individual risk assessments are updated regularly, they do not provide staff with sufficient guidance on the actions that they must take to keep young people safe. In particular, what staff must do should they suspect a young person is under the influence of drugs or alcohol; preventing incidents of self-harm; and, protecting young people from potential allegations. To date, this has not affected young people's welfare or safety because staff know young people well and are suitably trained to deal with high-risk behaviours. Nonetheless, a less familiar or experienced member of staff would not have access to a robust risk assessment that provides clear safeguarding instructions.

In the main, staff record and report all significant events to the relevant bodies, such as the police, social workers and Ofsted. However, on one occasion, staff did not inform a social worker or make a record of a potential safeguarding concern. The manager acknowledged this as 'unsafe' practice and reported the incident to the social worker immediately. The social worker confirmed that this was an 'unusual' oversight and that staff's communication and safeguarding practice is predominantly good. Additionally, other safeguarding records demonstrate effective safeguarding practice in the home.

Staff recruitment practice is largely robust. The manager ensures that all staff are suitably vetted prior to them taking up post. A good practice recommendation has been raised to strengthen safer recruitment practice further; this is specifically in relation to recording the reasons for any gaps in employment and keeping photographic identity on each staff member's file. These minor shortfalls are administrative errors.

The home has effective monitoring systems in place. The manager continues to monitor and review areas for development and young people's progress, which is documented clearly in their individual plans. All reports, including Regulation 44 and 45 reports and the recently revised statement of purpose, have been sent to Ofsted as required. This enables the service regulator to evaluate the service and keep up to date with any changes, such as new staff.

The registered manager is experienced and is currently undertaking the relevant management qualification; she hopes to complete this by the end of April 2017. She is a strong and dedicated manager who supports and leads her team consistently well. The stability of the team, the quality of care provided by staff, and the ongoing improvements achieved in the home demonstrate effective leadership and management of the home.

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care and accommodation to three young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/04/2016	Full	Good
21/12/2015	Interim	Not judged
11/08/2015	Full	Inadequate
18/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- Ensure that medicines are administered in line with a medically approved protocol. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)
- Ensure that recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection 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

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 that 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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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