

Children's homes inspection – Interim

Inspection date	07/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC357133
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Social Care Services (Clayton) Limited
Registered provider address	31 Shaw Road, Stockport, Cheshire, SK4 4AG

Responsible individual	Stephen Davitt
Registered manager	Raymond Ashton
Inspector	Ceri Evans

Inspection date	07/02/2017
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. The home was last inspected in May 2016. It was found to be offering a good service to young people. Since then, the majority of young people have continued to make good progress relative to their individual starting points. Young people clearly benefit from good-quality care, support and encouragement from the staff, who evidently want what is best for them and understand their needs. This was confirmed by a professional who said; '[Name] struggled when she first arrived, but since then I can see that she has great relationships with staff and speaks fondly of them, especially her key worker.' Staff work in partnership with the virtual school and with other education professionals to try to meet young people's learning needs. As a result, one young person continues to thrive and enjoys a full-time college placement. However, despite good links, one young person does not have an identified school placement. The manager has taken appropriate steps to escalate this concern. Nevertheless, a lack of appropriate education greatly inhibits the young person's progress at a very crucial stage of their education. This has the potential to impact on the young person's self-esteem, confidence and future life chances. The arrangements for protecting young people are good. This ensures that they are cared for safely. Young people benefit from clear and consistent behaviour management strategies. Young people are encouraged to behave in a manner that is acceptable and safe for them and others. Incidents of challenging behaviour are becoming less frequent because staff are managing young people's frustrations well. Furthermore, physical interventions have not been used with the current group of young people. This demonstrates that they are relatively settled and are enjoying stable placements. Records demonstrate that, following the departure of one young person, there has been a vast reduction in the number of missing-from-home incidents. However, when young people do go missing, staff respond promptly and are resourceful in seeking them out. Staff make a concerted effort to keep in contact with the young people and to locate them as quickly as possible. Close working relationships and regular professional meetings ensure that information is shared with relevant	

parties. Furthermore, good arrangements are in place for missing-from-home return interviews. The manager ensures that these are undertaken by an independent person after every missing-from-home episode. This approach provides a key opportunity to gather information and to help young people make safer choices in the future.

Staff demonstrate a sound understanding of their duty to safeguard and protect the welfare of young people. They contribute well to young people's individual risk management plans and provide appropriate support and guidance to young people during times of increased anxiety and crisis. The staff make good use of their knowledge of young people's risks and vulnerabilities in order to promote their safety and well-being. When staff are concerned about young people's safety, they take appropriate action to make sure that young people receive the support that they need. On one occasion this has included serving planned notice on a young person when the manager concluded that the home could no longer keep them safe.

Young people's risk assessments are reviewed and updated following any significant incident. However, the assessment of risk in relation to managing admissions is less robust. The assessments do not fully consider how the home plans to manage the group dynamic. Furthermore, the assessments fail to demonstrate how the admission of a young person may impact on the risky behaviours of others in the home. To date, this has not impacted on the young people currently living in the home. That said, this approach to assessment weakens the overall effectiveness of the home's matching process, and therefore requires some revision.

Procedures are in place to ensure that relevant professionals and agencies are informed in the event of a serious incident. However, on at least one occasion the manager failed to notify HMCI of information pertaining to suspected child sexual exploitation. This hinders the regulator in its role of ensuring that young people are protected from harm.

The manager is making suitable efforts to maintain a consistent staff team through a period of change within the organisation. Three new members of staff have joined the team since the last inspection. Staff receive good-quality support from the management team, which enables them to provide a positive and caring environment for young people. Staff receive regular formal and informal supervision as well as annual appraisal. This provides staff with the opportunity to discuss their work and the care and well-being of young people. Staff confirm that managers offer an open-door policy and are always available to them. This enables staff to access to additional support and guidance as and when they need it.

The manager undertakes regular monitoring of the home to ensure that it operates in accordance with the statement of purpose. Monthly independent visits are undertaken to review the home's performance and identify areas for improvement. The registered manager has a sufficient understanding of the strengths of the

service and is able to identify areas where improvement can be made. This is further supported by the continued use of a development plan that sets out plans to drive further improvements in the home.

Young people say that they feel safe and the home presents as a comfortable place to be. Following a recommendation made at previous inspections, the home has experienced a programme of refurbishment and upgrade. The lounge area, hall, stairs and landing have all been redecorated and the overall presentation of the home has improved. However, the recently fitted bedroom-door alarms detract from the overall homely feel of the environment. The alarms are loud and intrusive, and they undermine young people's privacy. The manager has acknowledged this shortfall and is in the process of identifying alternative options.

Information about this children's home

This is a privately run children's home that provides care and accommodation for up to three young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/05/2016	Full	Good
11/02/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
06/05/2015	Full	Good
05/01/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
8: The education standard (1) The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— (a) that staff— (viii) help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1))	17/03/2017
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if a child is involved in or subject to, or suspected of being involved in or subject to sexual exploitation. (Regulation 40(4)(a))	17/03/2017

Recommendations

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

- The registered person should only accept placements for children when they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and when they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- Children's homes should 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 legislation (alarms); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. This relates to the use of bedroom door alarms. These must be no more intrusive than necessary. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page.15, paragraph 3.9)

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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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
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