

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC357133
Inspector	Angela Whiteley
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Social Care Services (Clayton) Limited
Registered person address	31 Shaw Road STOCKPORT Cheshire SK4 4AG

Responsible individual	Stephen Marx Davitt
Registered manager	Raymond Harry Ashton
Date of last inspection	20/01/2014

Inspection date	24/07/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	adequate
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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Young people enjoy good quality care in this home and feel safe here. They benefit from personalised care packages, which take account of their complex needs; this enables them to achieve improved outcomes across most aspects of their welfare and development. They have very positive views about their relationships with staff and speak positively about how their lives have improved during their time here. This is firmly endorsed by feedback from relatives and external professionals.

Other strengths of the home include the stability of the staff team, independence planning and partnership working, particularly with families. One parent commented that, 'staff are brilliant.' Professionals speak positively about the level of communication with the staff and Registered Manager. Young people are able to develop skills at a pace suited to their age and abilities, some prepare to return home with intensive support from the staff team.

Safeguarding arrangements are generally sound and staff show a suitable understanding of child protection procedures. They take appropriate action to implement safeguarding measures when young people go missing from home. The homes records confirm that these incidents have reduced significantly as young people settle into their placement. There are however, some shortfalls in the recording of restraints, emergency escape plans, inconsistent reviews of some risk

assessments, some individual work sessions with young people not taking place and not consistently notifying the local authority designated officer of allegations where they may appear relatively insignificant or have already been reported to the placing authority. Consequently, three requirements are made to improve practice in these areas. These breaches in regulation have not directly harmed young people.

Further requirements and recommendations are set to help the home address several administrative shortfalls with regard to a review of the homes Statement of Purpose, children's guide and development plan. Additionally, issues are identified in respect of access to specific staff training, supervision records and the recording of team minutes. These do not negatively impact on the welfare or safety of young people and do not significantly undermine the level of care provided.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home provides care and accommodation for up to three young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/01/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
22/04/2013	Full	good
10/12/2012	Interim	satisfactory progress
26/04/2012	Full	adequate

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
4 (2001)	ensure the home's Statement of Purpose consists of a statement as to the matters listed in Schedule 1. In particular, the age of children it provides accommodation for, details of the qualifications and clinical supervision of the staff involved in the therapy provided. Also, ensure an up-to-date copy of the document is provided to Ofsted (Regulation 4 (1) (2) & Schedule 1 (8) (a) (19) (a) (b))	04/09/2014
11 (2001)	promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children accommodated there. In particular, ensure risk assessments and behaviour management strategies are reviewed by the Registered Manager following	04/09/2014

	any incidents of self-harm and that young people receive appropriate support and information with regard to sexual health (Regulation 11 (1) (a))	
17B (2001)	ensure that physical intervention records include the signature of a person authorised by the registered provider to make the record and that they have spoken to the child and the person using the measure about the use of the measure. This is specifically with regard to a Registered Manager using the measure and writing the record (Regulation 17B (3) (h) (i))	04/09/2014
32 (2001)	ensure after consultation with the fire service an adequate escape plan is provided that takes account of the use of bedroom window restrictors on the first floor and that persons working at the home and children accommodated there are aware of the procedure and have practiced it. (Regulation 32 (1) (b) (e))	04/09/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure the Children's Guide includes information about how a young person can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer (NMS 13.5)
- ensure the written development plan is reviewed annually (NMS 15.2)
- ensure that staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children, with particular regard to the provision of child sexual exploitation training (NMS 18.1)
- ensure a written or electronic record is kept by the home detailing the time at date and length of each supervision held, particularly for the registered person (NMS 19.5)
- ensure allegations against people that work with children are reported by the designated person to the LADO. This includes allegations that on the face of it may appear relatively insignificant or that have also been reported directly to police or Children and Family Services (NMS 20.6)
- ensure the manager regularly monitors the quality and adequacy of record keeping and takes action when needed, with particular regard to team meeting records (NMS 22.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people feel safe in this home and say they are well cared for and respected. They feel valued, which increases their self-esteem and confidence. Consistency in practice and the commitment of the staff helps young people to develop and sustain positive attachments. Young people who have been at the home only a short while settle quickly with high levels of support. They make good progress from their starting point across all aspects of their welfare and development. One young person wrote, 'I like living here because I like the staff here, and what they do, they have helped me a lot, and I think they like me.' Another young person said that the home is, 'Mint' and scored it nine out of ten.

Young people benefit from the support and encouragement of staff to lead a healthy lifestyle. They participate in regular exercise and have a varied healthy diet that they help to prepare and plan with staff. They benefit socially from attending community activities of their choice, which promotes self-esteem and confidence. They are registered with primary health care providers and have access to additional support services, such as therapists and specialist health professionals. They learn the importance of good physical and emotional health through going for long walks, for example, and focussed individual work sessions, which further increases confidence and self-esteem.

Independence is promoted well within the home and takes account of young people's skills and abilities. They make positive progress and develop skills that help them become more self-sufficient and prepare them for adult life. Staff work individually with young people to help them understand the impact their life experiences have on their behaviours. Young people develop positive coping strategies and new skills with the support of staff and other professionals, which helps them to manage crises and keeps them safe. The commitment and motivation of the staff and other professionals, therapeutic support, the use of behaviour management plans and effective incentives help to strengthen young people's emotional resilience and psychological well-being.

Where appropriate, young people benefit from family contact. Staff support, supervise and facilitate direct and indirect contact, which helps to build and maintain positive relationships in a safe environment with those who are important to young people. Staff undertake effective work with young people's families. This includes planning and supporting successful rehabilitation. This enables young people to return home safely.

Most young people have appropriate education placements, have regular attendance and make good progress from their starting point relative to their age and ability. Staff are persistent with young people, encouraging regular attendance at school and

college, which helps fulfil their potential. Wider learning opportunities are encouraged through educational visits, researching topics at the library and on the internet, and discussing issues with staff.

Quality of care

good

Young people receive good quality care from a committed and motivated staff team. They have very good relationships with staff and with each other. Professionals and parents are highly complimentary about the staff and their work with young people. One parent said; 'Staff are brilliant, I have nothing but praise for them, they have really helped our family get back on track'. Also, 'they always talk to him about his behaviour and explain things to him'. A placing social worker commented she is; 'very impressed by the lengths staff will go to in order to support the young people and also how well they know the young people.'

There is good communication between young people, staff and professionals with an interest in securing positive progress for young people. Staff understand young people's diverse needs and work hard to help young people achieve their potential. Staff are persistent when faced with setbacks and continue to support and guide young people. They use effective positive behaviour management strategies, which help young people make positive choices in their lives. No complaints have been received from young people or parents who confirm that they know how to use the home's complaints process.

There is strong partnership working with families. Staff work closely with parents and young people to tailor and implement placement plans. Young people confirm they are aware of their plans and feel part of the process. They have well written individualised care plans, which identify their needs. Plans are regularly reviewed, which helps to provide stability and permanence. Young people attend and contribute to their reviews, which mean they know what progress they are making. They feel that their views have some impact on the running of the home, such as in activity and menu planning, planning for the summer holiday and assisting and planning the redecoration of the home.

Staff work closely with their colleagues in education to secure appropriate education placements. They are imaginative in creating opportunities for young people to learn and develop skills. For example, visits to museums and special events assists young people's understanding of historical events. As a result, young people learn about the diverse society they live in.

There is good access to health support services and staff support young people to attend their appointments. Young people participate in a broad range of sporting and social activities, such as horse riding, fishing and youth club. This helps to promote their health and development and involves them in their community.

Young people confirm they are comfortable living in the home, which is in a good location. The home is undergoing some repair and redecoration, once completed young people will benefit from living in a spacious and homely environment, which promotes their welfare and safety.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Young people confirm they feel safe, secure and well cared for in their home. They can talk to any member of staff if they are concerned about anything and confirm they know how to make a complaint should they need to. The process is set out clearly in the children's guide however; they do not know how to contact their reviewing officer. Consequently, they do not have all the choices they should have to make their views known or to raise any concerns. The home has a zero tolerance policy for bullying issues. Young people are appropriately supervised but if issues do arise they are dealt with swiftly by the staff team and addressed in individual work sessions with the young people concerned.

Young people are protected by the home's recruitment, selection and vetting procedures. This ensures no one who is unsuitable to work with young people is employed by the home. A range of generally good health and safety measures are implemented to ensure that young people live in a safe and secure environment. However, the home does not have a written emergency exit plan that staff and young people are aware of that identifies alternative actions should an emergency occur in different areas of the home. Some fire equipment is kept behind locked doors and the use of bedroom window restrictors requires further discussion with the fire service, as this practice may compromise young people's safety and welfare.

Young people receive high levels of support and supervision and currently choose not to go missing from the home. However, if they do, staff know the local area and community well and go looking for young people when they are missing or are reported as unauthorised absence. They have established good links with the local police and if incidents do occur, there are clear practices and agreements in place that staff understand to assist the safe return of young people. The home's written records show the frequency of young people going missing has reduced significantly over recent weeks. All such episodes are monitored, fully considered and reviewed to promote young people's safety and welfare.

Individual risk assessments are not consistently reviewed and endorsed for effectiveness by the Registered Manager. They do not always clearly identify and take account of young people's emerging needs and concerns, in particular, after an incident of self-harm. Also, an individual work session was not completed regarding a sexual health issue. This compromises young people's safety, health, development and well-being.

Staff are trained in all aspects of safeguarding. They are knowledgeable and confident in implementing the home's safeguarding policies and procedures and generally take a proactive approach to ensure the safety and welfare of young people remains paramount. However, there have been two recent incidents where the local authority designated officer has not been contacted regarding an allegation. One incident, referred to the placing authority social worker is fully investigated and does not meet the threshold for a safeguarding referral. The other is currently being investigated by other professionals. The Registered Manager is notifying the relevant professionals about the matter. This delay may compromise young people's safety and welfare.

Staff are clear that physical intervention is very much a last resort, and are more comfortable using therapeutic crisis intervention techniques and the positive relationships they have built up with young people to defuse situations. Consequently, there is minimal use of physical restraint, which is demonstrated in the homes written records. However, not all records are fully compliant with legislation. In particular, one record, which is not signed and monitored by an authorised person, who is not the Registered Manager as he was actively involved in the restraint and in writing the record. This does not promote comprehensive learning from such a situation and does not fully protect the safety and welfare of the young person and members of staff involved.

Leadership and management

adequate

Young people benefit from having an experienced and committed Registered Manager. He has been a Registered Manager since October 2009 and was appointed at this home in August 2012. He is working towards a relevant leadership and management qualification. There is good support from a stable experienced staff team who have a good balance of gender, age and ethnicity. Together they provide stability and understand the needs of the young people in placement. They demonstrate a strong commitment to helping young people achieve their potential. A staff member commented; 'They work hard to strive for positive outcomes and work as a team and are consistent.'

The home is sufficiently resourced. The staffing ratio meets the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose, this includes the Registered Manager being regularly deployed on individual shifts. The staff team work effectively with parents, social workers and other agencies, which provides a consistent approach to young people's care. Professionals and families speak very positively about the support young people receive.

The home has a generally well written Statement of Purpose, which outlines the aims and objectives; however it does not contain all the required information. This means the document is not providing a clear picture of the home and the care that is being provided. Furthermore, the provider has not sent an up-to-date copy of the

document to Ofsted. Additionally, the Registered Manager has not yet reviewed the homes development plan to assist with forward planning.

Staff routinely undertake mandatory training including, safeguarding, first aid and therapeutic crisis intervention techniques. Opportunities are available for additional training in response to young people's emerging needs, however staff have not yet received training to help them support young people involved in sexual exploitation.

Staff confirm they are well supported by their colleagues and management through regular supervision, training and team meetings. This ensures they have regular opportunities to develop their practice to meet young people's needs. However, a written or electronic record of the time, date and duration of supervision is not kept at the home for all staff, in particular, for the Registered Manager. Also, written records of team meetings do not provide an accurate account of the discussions held. They lack sufficient detail for the manager to monitor the quality and adequacy of the record keeping.

Regular monitoring and quality assurance systems are in place with regard to oversight of the quality of care in the home. The Registered Manager understands the strengths and weaknesses in the home. He acknowledges the identified shortfalls with the administrative processes, which are to be addressed with some urgency. There are no outstanding requirements or recommendations from previous inspections, which demonstrates the Registered Manager is committed to an improvement agenda.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.