

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	14/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC378407
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Time-Out Children's Homes Limited
Registered provider address	7 St Petersgate, Stockport, Cheshire SK1 1EB

Responsible individual	Janet Lumb
Registered manager	Karen Houghton
Inspector	Paul Scott

Inspection date	14/02/2017
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 is run effectively by an experienced and suitably qualified manager. She also manages another home within the organisation and divides her time between the two services. She is well supported by a relatively new but increasingly confident staff team that shows a good level of commitment to the young people in their care. The manager has a good understanding of the home's strengths. This is because of the good monitoring activity that is undertaken, in particular the monthly visit from the independent visitor, which is extremely thorough and beneficial to promoting continuous improvement in the home. The manager recognises the importance of this rigorous assessment and ensures that action is taken to address identified shortfalls. The manager has taken suitable action to address the one requirement and three recommendations from the full inspection in September 2016. A number of improvements have been made to the physical environment. This includes completion of outstanding repairs and some redecoration. A number of areas have been made more homely, through the use of photographs, pictures and soft furnishings, further contributing to a pleasant and comfortable environment. Young people now have access to an internet-enabled computer that can be used for education and recreational purposes. Good, age-appropriate safety protocols are in place for the use of the internet, and young people have been offered guidance on how to use social media safely. Good arrangements are in place for young people who struggle to engage in education. Staff maintain good links with school placements, in particular the organisation's school. For example, care staff are currently working with education colleagues to deliver an individualised timetable for one young person who finds it difficult to cope in the education setting. This programme is structured with a clear focus on overcoming barriers to participation and increasing school attendance.	

Young people benefit from good care and support that is individually tailored to their unique and specific needs. Staff work hard to establish positive trusting relationships that turn into strong reciprocal attachments over time. One young person said, 'I have mixed feelings about moving on to my new foster placement. I have been here a while and will miss most of the staff. I do think that they have helped me a lot and this has been a good home to live in'.

One young person has left the home since the last inspection. The manager recognised that the escalating concerns that the young person was placing themselves at serious risk of harm could not be safely managed by what was a relatively inexperienced staff team. After exhausting all options, notice was given and the placement was ended. Throughout this challenging period, staff demonstrated good levels of resilience and made every effort to make the placement work.

There has been one admission to the home since the last inspection. The young person's social worker confirms that this was well planned and sensitively managed, and that this good support has continued. She said:

I am really pleased with the placement so far. Staff are thinking about how they can work with (name) and address his issues. They are not just ticking the boxes. They really want to help him and I can already see improvement.

Staff help young people to understand and make sense of their past experiences and overcome the challenges that they face in life. The two young people who currently live at the home are at different stages of this journey. Both are noted to be making good progress, relative to their starting point and time in placement. For example, this placement has been extremely beneficial in helping one young person find stability. This has provided a solid platform on which to plan for the future and he is now beginning to transition to a foster family. He realises the importance of education, refrains from anti-social and risk-taking behaviour and makes good choices about friendships in the community, which are encouraged and supported by staff. His social worker said:

This has been a positive placement. (Name) has trusting relationships with staff and feels that this is his home. He is in a good routine and staff have been very supportive of his long-term plan to move into a foster placement. Staff have prepared him well for this although he will be sad to leave.

Young people's needs, behaviours, risks and vulnerabilities are clearly outlined in their care plans and risk management and safety plans. Well thought out strategies, many influenced by the organisation's therapy team, are used to keep young people and staff safe. Generally these are well implemented by staff who take seriously their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. However, during the inspection it was noted that one young person's bedroom smelt of smoke, indicating that they were not following the agreed protocol of handing in their smoking materials at night. The manager gave a commitment to address this with

the young person, including educating him about the inherent risks to himself and others if he continues with this behaviour, a practice which needs to be consistently challenged by staff.

There has been one safeguarding investigation since the last inspection. Initially this was not well managed. Senior managers were slow to make a referral to the local authority designated officer and there was a worrying delay in the implementation of a safety plan for the young people concerned. A response was prompted by the independent visitor, who raised this concern immediately. Subsequent action was robust and included strategies for managing the risk and involvement of external agencies and professionals. The manager has reflected on this example of poor practice and demonstrates good learning. Practice has been changed and the manager is awaiting a higher level of safeguarding training, commensurate with her role as registered manager.

Information in the home's statement of purpose is not up to date. The document does not accurately reflect the staff who are working at the home. For example, a number of staff who no longer work at the home are listed, and some who currently do are not. Furthermore, details of staff qualifications and experience are inaccurate in some cases.

Information about this children's home

This is one of a number of children's homes operated by a private company. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The organisation also has a small therapy department as well as primary and secondary education provisions, which young people can access if appropriate.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/09/2016	Full	Good
25/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
22/07/2015	Full	Good
26/02/2015	Interim	Improved 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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
(3) The registered person must keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it. This is with specific reference to ensuring that this document accurately reflects the staff working at the home, including details of their experience and qualifications. (Regulation 16(3)(a))	14/03/2017

Recommendation

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

- Staff must take steps to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis and should assist the child to understand the risks and manage their risk-taking behaviour to keep themselves and others safe. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraphs 9.5 and 9.7)

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 whom 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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