

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	22/07/2015
Unique reference number	SC378407
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Time-Out Children's Homes Limited
Registered person address	7 St Petersgate, Stockport, Cheshire, SK1 1EB

Responsible individual	Ms Janet Lumb
Registered manager	Miss Karen Houghton
Inspector	Mrs Angela Whiteley

Inspection date	22/07/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved 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

SC378407

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The home has developed effective partnership working with the in-house multi-disciplinary clinical team that provides direct support to staff and young people. They help to address young people's risk-taking behaviours and mental health needs. Staff receive regular training in the use of specific therapeutic models of care and behaviour management techniques under the direct guidance of a highly experienced clinical team. This intensive support helps young people form positive attachments to staff and other adults. As a result, young people show a reduction in disturbing and challenging behaviours that many exhibit at the beginning of their placements.
- Young people confirm they feel safe at this home. They settle quickly into a warm and nurturing environment. They develop trust in an experienced staff team who understand and are committed to meeting their needs. Staff demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of safeguarding practices and confirm they are well supported and guided in their role.
- Young people have personalised care, education and treatment plans which are formulated from detailed multi-agency assessments. Their plans give clear instructions on how they should be care for. This ensures there is a consistent approach to young people's care that promotes their welfare and development.
- Young people benefit from effective management of the home and a commitment to an improvement agenda. The Registered Manager demonstrates strong leadership skills; she has a child-friendly approach and is passionate about achieving positive outcomes for young people. She is developing a skilled and knowledgeable staff team who share her vision.
- Some shortfalls are noted. These relate to the homes Statement of Purpose, staff appraisals, the manager's six-monthly monitoring report and the independent visitors monitoring reports. Also, general wear and tear of the home and some recent damage requires prompt attention to ensure the home continues to provide a homely and comfortable environment for young people.

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
16: The registered person must notify HMCI of any revisions to the homes Statement of Purpose and must send a copy of the revised statement to HMCI within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3) (b))	13/08/2015

Recommendations

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

- Ensure the provider provides a homely environment. In particular, ensure the home is well-maintained and promptly decorated and repaired to address wear and tear following any incidents of damage (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Ensure all staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually and ensure the appraisal process takes into account where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and those of children and young people in the home (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 61, paragraph 13.5)
- Ensure the registered manager's report produced under Regulation 45 clearly identifies any actions required for the next six months of delivery in the home and how these actions will be addressed. The report should be used as a tool for continuous improvement of the home (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 65 paragraph 15.4)
- Ensure the individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person makes a rigorous and impartial assessment of the homes arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 65 paragraph 15.5)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a private children's home registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two children and young people who may be experiencing emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. A multi-disciplinary team supports children and young people with their mental health needs. The home offers primary and secondary education at an off-site registered school.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/02/2015	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
11/09/2014	CH - Full	Good
27/02/2014	CH - Interim	Not Judged
02/05/2013	CH - Full	Adequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	GOOD
Young people benefit from a nurturing and safe environment and confirm they like living at this home. They benefit from the stability of their placement and have good opportunities to develop positive relationships with an experienced and knowledgeable staff team. There have been no complaints from young people who confirm they know how to use the homes' complaints process. Young people make good progress in most aspects of their lives. They enjoy good health and are aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They attend all their health appointments and meetings with specialist health professionals. The home has strong links with the in-house therapeutic team. Collectively this means that young people's physical and mental health needs are promptly assessed and met. Staff respond to each individuals challenging needs using a therapeutic model of care. The strategies and techniques adopted support positive change for young people. Some young people who came to the home with a history of going missing have not displayed this behaviour for some time. The homes records confirm these incidents have reduced as young people settle and become stable in their placement. Young people begin to develop personal care skills with the support of staff. They also begin to learn a broad range of practical skills, which will be helpful to them in later life. They are encouraged to eat well-balanced healthy, nutritious meals to promote their health and physical well-being. Young people participate in a range of physical and social activities, such as attending scouts, fund raising events, youth club, sailing, biking and playing out. They are encouraged to develop friendships and their friends are welcome at the house. This helps to develop self-esteem and confidence and provides opportunity for positive engagement with friends in the wider community. Staff are committed to improving young people's life chances through education. In order to help young people fulfil their potential, staff work closely with their colleagues in education and provide opportunities for them to succeed. For example, staff are proactive in helping young people engage in their individual education programmes, helping to promptly resolve any barriers to full participation in education. Attendance at school is excellent and young people make some good progress. Staff comment positively about young people's potential to achieve when engaged in learning. They attend parents' evenings,	

assemblies and celebrate young people's achievements, which builds confidence and self-esteem. Their effective inter-agency working with education, social workers and health providers means young people can successfully access the resources they require to address their current and emerging needs.

Young people benefit from contact with family and friends. Staff support contact arrangements that are agreed by the placing authority social worker. This helps young people maintain a positive relationship with those that are important to them. Staff respond quickly to any unsafe situations that arise, implementing sound safeguarding measures that support and protect young people.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	GOOD
Young people are safe at this home and know who they can talk if they have any concerns about their care. They benefit from high levels of support and supervision provided by a staff team who are trained in all aspects of safeguarding. Staff are knowledgeable and confident in implementing the home's safeguarding policies and procedures and take a proactive approach to ensuring young people's safety. There are no issues of bullying, sexual exploitation, self-harm or any child protection referrals for this home. Staff recognise the particular vulnerabilities relating to the complex needs of the young people in their care. Interventions are thoughtful and underpinned by clear individual risk assessments and treatment plans. This enables young people to begin to take managed and considered risks in preparation for greater independence. For example, actively working towards increased free-time for young people, while helping to protect them and develop respect and trust. Staff are trained in the use of physical intervention but only use this as a last resort. Records confirm incidents of physical restraint have significantly reduced as young people settle into their daily routines. Staff prefer to use therapeutic intervention techniques, such as de-escalation, humour, distraction and time-out. Incentives and rewards are used to good effect and sanctions are rarely required. By using a consistent approach staff are effective in diffusing young people's challenging behaviours. The homes records confirm the frequency of young people going absent without permission or going missing from the home has significantly and there have been no incidents since January 2015. If young people do go missing from the home or school, staff know the local area and community well. They implement agreed procedures and go looking for young people and return them safely back home with the support of the police. Any episodes are monitored, fully considered and	

reviewed to promote young people's safety and return interviews of young people who have run away are conducted by an independent person.

The home is developing strong local links with other professionals in respect of risk evaluation and the support of young people. For example, young people are referred to the youth offending service to undertake preventative work in relation to risk taking and offending behaviour. This helps promote their safety and well-being as well as providing them with opportunities to make better choices about their lives.

Young people enjoy a safe and secure environment. They benefit from strong recruitment procedures, which ensure only people that are suitable to work with vulnerable young people are employed at the home. There are suitable systems in place to ensure that visitors to the home are appropriately vetted and supervised to protect young people. Health and safety systems are in place and are effective. Young people regularly practice evacuations which means they know how to exit the building safely and quickly in case of an emergency. Good practice around storage, handling, administration and disposal of medication also safeguards young people's welfare.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	GOOD
Young people benefit from having a Registered Manager who is experienced and committed to helping them achieve their potential. She is an effective manager who is suitably qualified and experienced. She has been a Registered Manager since July 2014 and has a relevant leadership and management qualification. She also manages another small home within the same company, which is in close proximity to this home. Currently there are no children placed at her other home which means her time is fully dedicated to this home. The manager has strong support from an enthusiastic and committed staff team. Together they provide a high level of stability for young people and fully understand their needs. The home is well resourced, employs sufficient staff and delivers the services and support outlined in its comprehensive Statement of Purpose. This document is regularly reviewed to ensure the needs of young people are safely met. However, the provider does not consistently send the reviewed document to Ofsted. Despite this, young people, parents, placing social workers and other professionals are clear about the services and support the home provides. Young people benefit from the homes strong commitment to a broad range of staff	

training and personal development. In particular, therapeutic training is delivered to all staff by accredited trainers and is sensitive to matters of attachment, loss and relationship-building. This underpins staff knowledge of therapeutic models of care. Alongside this there is a good balance of direct training and e-learning courses; this ensures staff have the required skills and knowledge to meet young people's current and emerging needs. In addition, the manager is proactive in her use of research, which helps her staff team keep up-to-date with new ideas and practice.

Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of young people and are able to respond effectively to their needs. They confirm that they are well supported through regular professional supervision, clinical consultations, training, team meetings and annual appraisals. This ensures they have frequent opportunity to reflect and develop their practice. However, not all staff have received their annual appraisal and there is no process for young people or other professionals who have worked with members of staff during the year to contribute to this annual review. This is a missed opportunity to seek views and opinions about staff's fitness to carry out their role.

Young people's records are well structured, stored securely and recording is of a good standard. They benefit from the manager and staff liaising effectively with professionals, parents and relatives, which provide a consistent approach to their care. Young people are regularly involved in decisions about their care and influence the running of the home. They attend review meetings, engage in keyworker sessions and staff listen and act on their wishes and views.

The manager has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home, learns from monitoring and inspection activities and improves practice accordingly. Consequently, all the requirements and recommendations from the last inspection have been addressed. She has a strong and effective working relationship with partner agencies and other professionals. She is appropriately assertive with agencies if they do not provide a good enough service for young people.

Internal quality assurance processes are generally good. The provider is reviewing the six-monthly report template that reviews the quality of care as currently it does not include what actions are to be taken when shortfalls are identified. In addition, the provider intends to continue to use a working development plan that is regularly reviewed and will set realistic targets to drive forward further improvement.

External monitoring by the independent visitor does not always contain sufficient critical scrutiny to assess the homes arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people. The manager confirmed this was also her view and she is addressing this issue directly with the independent visitor.

The home is a detached family house that receives regular maintenance and repairs. Despite this, there is some wear and tear and damage, and communal areas look tired. Prompt attention to repairs, painting woodwork, walls and ceilings along with replacing pictures and soft furnishings will provide a more homely, warm and comfortable environment for young people to live in. While this work is acknowledged by the manager it has been outstanding for some time. These improvements will ensure the home continues to operate in the best interests of young people.

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

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