

SC378407

Registered provider: Timeout Childrens Homes Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

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 may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 31 July to 1 August 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 14 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection

None.

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people live in a caring and supportive home that over time is making a positive impact on their lives.

- Staff recognise young people as individuals with significantly different needs and abilities. They take a highly individualised approach to care planning, which ensures that each young person receives a specifically tailored package of care and support.
- Staff understand young people's behaviours, risks and vulnerabilities and are effective in their implementation of proportionate strategies to help keep them safe.
- The manager and staff work closely with parents, carers and professionals, who are consistently complimentary about the services and support available in this home.
- The registered manager promotes a strong child-focused ethos that is successfully implemented by the committed and caring staff team.
- The manager has high expectations of all professionals and will challenge them when they do not meet their obligations in terms of supporting each young person.
- Professional development is actively encouraged and supported through good induction, supervision, appraisal and training.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Some parts of the physical environment are not reflective of the good standard of care offered in this home.
- Not all electronic records are easily accessible.
- Staff do not implement consistently the rules around pocket money. This means that young people are not consistently encouraged to take responsibility for their home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/09/2016	Full	Good
25/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
22/07/2015	Full	Good

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who — In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to — ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6(2)(c)(i)) In particular, complete all outstanding repairs, including any damaged doors, and redecorate those areas where holes have been filled.	05/09/2017

Recommendations

- Ensure that the expectations of standards of behaviour are high for all staff and children in the home and that they are consistently implemented. This is with particular reference to ensuring that pocket money is not given until the expectation to tidy their bedrooms is met. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.11)
- Ensure that information in electronic records can be easily accessed. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including quality standards', page 61, paragraph 14.2)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people benefit from well-planned care that is personalised to their individual and specific needs. Despite the relative newness of some members of the team, relationships are strong. These relationships have created a genuine sense of belonging for young people and over time is providing them with a sense of stability and belonging. As a result, young people are making good progress, relative to their individual plans, time in

placement and level of understanding.

One young person has left the home since the interim inspection in February 2017. This was a well-planned and fully supported transition to a foster placement. Staff maintained an interest in the young person after he left and were there to support him when the placement broke down. They welcomed him back to the home and have worked hard to remotivate and engage him in home life. His mum said, 'I was buzzing as soon as he got back here. The staff go above and beyond and I can't sing their praises enough. He has been a lot better since he came back. I want him to stay here because they are fantastic with him.'

The manager and staff recognise the importance of education and do their best to promote this on a daily basis. Both young people are currently home educated, one by care staff and the other by tutors from the placing authority. Young people are engaging positively, but the manager recognises that this arrangement can only be a temporary measure, although for one young person it has been a significant amount of time since the breakdown of his school placement. The manager has been proactive in her efforts to involve education professionals and work with them in an effort to identify suitable placements. When necessary, she has challenged them to ensure that finding a placement remains high on the placing authority's agenda. One carer said, 'The placing authority have been an issue. Staff have pushed for what [name] needs and have been as supportive as they can. Hopefully, things will start moving when the new school term begins.'

Staff monitor young people's health and provide them with the necessary support to ensure that routine checks are up to date. When necessary, they make referrals to specialist healthcare agencies, for example requesting assessments for autism. This, combined with the therapeutic support offered by the organisation's therapy department, means that young people's known and emerging physical and emotional health needs are routinely met.

There are many opportunities for young people to have their say through house meetings, key-work sessions and key conversations, as well as everyday discussions. During the inspection, staff could be seen asking young people what they want to do and negotiating the day-to-day decisions. They are encouraged to take an interest in their plans and are given good support in this respect, relative to their level of understanding. They have their own version of their plans, which enables them to maintain an age-appropriate understanding of their individual goals and the support they can expect to receive from staff.

Young people are supported to maintain contact with their families and other people who are important to them. Staff work closely with social workers to identify key people and ensure that safe contact is facilitated. They maintain good links with parents and ensure that face-to-face contact is well planned and of benefit for all those concerned. One parent said, 'They are really polite and very supportive of contact. They make sure [name] is OK and that it is fun. We have just had a really good contact to celebrate his birthday when everybody got involved in the fun.'

Staff are aware of the benefits that young people gain from engaging in positive recreational and social experiences. They make every effort to source activities and clubs based on each young person's hobbies and interests. Both young people were exceedingly busy during the inspection, with one attending a football summer camp and the other spending time with his friend in the community and scootering at the skate park. Plans are in place for them to go on holiday and staff have done some good work preparing one young person for this experience, due to his anxieties around visiting new places.

Some areas of the home do not reflect the general levels of care that young people receive overall. Young people have damaged walls in various rooms, and although the holes have been filled, the walls have not been redecorated. Also, a number of doors have been kicked in and are in need of replacement or permanent repair. There is some evidence that young people are held to account for this damage through financial reparation or helping the maintenance team complete repairs.

It is an expectation that young people tidy their bedrooms before being given their pocket money. However, staff are not being diligent in ensuring that this agreement is upheld and that good standards of tidiness are maintained. For example, on the day of the inspection, one young person had been given his pocket money, despite his bedroom being extremely untidy. This does little to encourage young people to take responsibility for, or pride in their home.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Staff are trained in child protection and demonstrate a good awareness of their role in keeping young people safe. Any emerging concerns are appropriately managed, shared among the staff team, and when necessary referred to external safeguarding professionals and agencies. As a result, all safeguarding concerns, including allegations, have been managed effectively in the best interest of the young person.

In many ways, this is a well-matched pair of young people, who for the majority of time get on well and accept each other's differences. However, at times, their extremely different personalities, behaviours, risks and vulnerabilities mean that interactional problems do occur. Staff are aware of this and make every effort to promote an ethos of tolerance and respect, while advocating a zero tolerance of bullying. This is regardless of whether it is intentional or not. One young person said, 'I sometimes feel bullied by [name] but I feel safe because staff deal with it and if it was a problem I know that the manager would deal with it.'

There have been no episodes of going missing for this group of young people. When young people have gone missing in the past, staff have been robust in their response. Plans are in place in the event that a young person should go missing. These plans are agreed with the police to ensure that a proportionate response can be taken, relative to the individual's behaviours, risks and vulnerabilities.

Risk assessments are comprehensive and are regularly reviewed and updated. They take into account each young person's level of understanding and include well thought-out strategies for helping to keep themselves safe. Each young person has a dedicated member of staff who takes responsibility for them during the shift. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of each young person's risks and vulnerabilities and temper the levels of supervision accordingly. Over time, these reduce as young people build up trust and become more able to make good decisions about keeping themselves safe. For example, one young person spends time in the community with his friends and the other is now attending football training without the need for staff to remain with him during the session. This is a small but significant step for this incredibly vulnerable and volatile young man.

Staff act as positive role models and reinforce positive behaviour through affirmation, praise and encouragement. Good routines and boundaries mean that young people are clear about what is expected of them in terms of their behaviour. For the most part these rules are well applied and have helped stabilise some aspects of young people's behaviour. One social worker recognised this, saying 'Staff have provided structure and stuck to boundaries since [name] came back to the home. Although he struggled at first, I have seen an improvement over the last few weeks.'

Individual behaviour management plans, which are influenced by the organisation's therapist, support staff in their management of challenging behaviour. All staff are trained in the organisation's approved behaviour management approach, including the use of physical restraint. Staff are effective in the implementation of this training and take a patient and understanding approach when managing challenging behaviour. This, combined with the good use of positive relationships, means that the use of restraint is infrequent. A parent said, '[name] has a real temper but they seem to know how to calm him down quickly. He is much better at managing his anger but I think this is also because he likes it here and gets on well with the staff.'

Recruitment practice is good throughout the organisation. The manager is fully involved in the recruitment of staff, which ensures that she is able to assess their ability and ensure that they have the right skills and attributes to work in the home. Detailed records are maintained and confirm that staff have been checked and vetted prior to starting work to ensure that they are safe to work with vulnerable young people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager was registered with Ofsted in July 2014. She is suitably experienced and qualified. She is also registered for another home within the organisation and splits her management time between the two. This arrangement is not detrimental to the running of this home. This is because the manager maintains good oversight and ensures that she is fully involved in all aspects of care planning. This is confirmed by parents and social workers, who are extremely complimentary of the manager and the staff team as a whole. A social worker said, 'The manager is fully involved in ensuring we all work towards the same plan. They all demonstrate a genuine care for [name] and are always

thinking about how best they can support him.'

The manager and staff have a good understanding of each young person's needs. They have high aspirations and work hard to create a strong child-centred ethos and approach. Staff know young people well and have a good understanding of how to meet their individual needs. They talk enthusiastically about caring for young people and are proud of the contribution they are making to each young person's successes and achievements. Strong working relationships have been developed with parents, social workers and needs-specific services such as mental health practitioners and therapists. This means that young people receive an individually tailored package of support which is delivered collaboratively.

Young people are cared for by a small but dedicated team of staff, some of whom work across the manager's two homes. Minor amendments were made to the home's statement of purpose during the inspection to reflect these arrangements more accurately. The team is made up of a good mix of gender, age and experience and all staff are either qualified or on course to complete a relevant qualification. New staff are well inducted and have their competency assessed throughout their induction and probationary period. This competency-based approach continues throughout their employment, underpinned by the organisation's commitment to developing a skilled and competent workforce. For example, each member of staff has a personal development plan that remains the focus of supervision and is formally reviewed annually as part of the appraisal process. The manager maintains oversight of staff development and ensures that each member of staff has the opportunities they need to progress, for example developing areas of responsibility or completing training that is in addition to that provided as part of the organisation's training plan.

Staff are provided with mandatory training, such as safeguarding, behaviour management, including restraint, and first aid. Additionally, staff are provided with reasonably good opportunities to enhance their knowledge through needs-led training and research-based learning. For example, the majority of staff have recently undertaken basic training in working with young people with autism as well developing a better understanding of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Consequently, staff are becoming increasingly skilled at managing the known and emerging needs of the current group of young people.

The manager has taken suitable action to address the requirement and recommendation from the previous inspection. This has resulted in better information being available in the home's statement of purpose and young people refraining from smoking in their bedrooms. The manager knows what the home does well and demonstrates a commitment to improving further the high standards of care and support available to young people. She uses a range of internal quality assurance processes effectively to monitor staff practice and to review young people's progress against their care plans. She has recently undertaken a self-assessment exercise with her staff team whereby staff members evaluated their practice, young people's progress and the home's performance generally, against Ofsted's new inspection framework. This exercise was not fully completed but has highlighted areas for improvement, which have been

incorporated into the home's detailed development plan.

Monthly monitoring visits are undertaken by an independent visitor. There have been a number of changes to the person completing these visits, which has contributed to a number of issues, in particular the quality of the independent visitor's report. For example, it is evident that in a small number of reports, the visitor was not assessing current practice and was cutting and pasting narrative from previous reports. Also, there were a number of inaccuracies in one report. To her credit, the manager was quick to challenge these shortfalls because she recognises and values the importance of external scrutiny. Current arrangements have much improved this process following a change of visitor.

Young people's records are comprehensively detailed and regularly updated. They provide a good insight into young people's lives. The manager is working with some staff to help them record in a more child-friendly manner. The organisation is in the process of introducing an electronic recording system. Overall, this is a very good system. For example, the inputting of certain information triggers other actions for managers and staff to complete, such as completing debriefs and holding key conversations following incidents. However, some information is not easy to locate. For example, when reviewing restraint records, it took the manager a considerable amount of time to locate debriefs for young people and staff. This has highlighted a need to consider how records can be better coordinated to ensure that they are easily accessible.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC378407

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Timeout Childrens Homes Ltd

Registered provider address: 7 St Petersgate, Stockport Cheshire SK1 1EB

Responsible individual: Janet Lumb

Registered manager: Karen Houghton

Inspector

Paul Scott, social care inspector

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