

# SC381339

Registered provider: Social Care Services (Clayton) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This private children's home provides care and accommodation for up to four young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The registered manager has been in place since July 2018.

**Inspection dates:** 8 to 9 May 2019

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| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>requires improvement to be good</b> |
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| How well children and young people are helped and protected | requires improvement to be good |
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|-------------------------------------------|------------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | inadequate |
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

**Date of last inspection:** 6 December 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement      |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 06/12/2018      | Full            | Good                      |
| 07/12/2017      | Full            | Good                      |
| 14/02/2017      | Interim         | Declined in effectiveness |
| 08/11/2016      | 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   |
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| <p>The positive relationship standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on mutual respect and trust, and understanding about acceptable behaviour and positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard requires that the registered person ensures that staff meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs as set out in the child's relevant plans and helps each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone.<br/>(Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(i)(iv))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 10/06/2019 |
| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. The registered person must—</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;</li> <li>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</li> <li>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;</li> <li>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare;</li> <li>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies.</li> </ul> <p>ensure that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm.</p> <p>ensure that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly.<br/>(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)(vi)(b)(e))</p> | 10/06/2019 |
| The leadership and management standard is that the registered                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 10/06/2019 |

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| <p>person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—<br/>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and<br/>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—<br/>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home.<br/>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(f))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |            |
| <p>The registered person must revise and implement a policy which sets out how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home, and ensure that the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to the children's home are reviewed regularly.<br/>Regulation (35) (a)(b))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 10/06/2019 |
| <p>The care planning standard is that children—<br/>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and<br/>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—<br/>that the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plans is requested, if—<br/>the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child's needs.<br/>(Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)(2)(e)(i))</p>                                                                                                                                                            | 10/06/2019 |
| <p>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—<br/>seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans;<br/>seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs;</p> <p>if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans; and<br/>seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered</p> | 10/06/2019 |

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| person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation.<br>(Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c)(d))                      |            |
| The registered person must ensure that all employees—undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience.<br>(Regulation 33 (4)(a)) | 10/06/2019 |

## Recommendations

- Responsibilities for the leadership and management fall on the registered person. In practice, those responsible for the day-to-day running of the homes, including leadership teams within large organisations, play a key role in enabling the registered person to fulfil the requirements of this standard. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.2) This is with specific regard to maintaining a consistent partnership between the company and the commissioning authority to ensure the best outcomes for young people.
- Any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person must make a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)
- Effective care planning and strong working relationships between the staff of the home and the contracted placing authority are essential to the success of the placements. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.2)
- The home's records on each child represent a significant contribution to their life history. Staff must ensure that records of key-work sessions are a reflection of the work undertaken to meet the identified needs as detailed in the child's placement plan. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good**

Since the last inspection, two young people have been discharged, while being held in police custody. One young person was initially placed with emergency foster parents but has since been placed with a family member. The second young person was placed in an unregulated setting supported by agency staff. There has been one new admission to

the home. At the time of this inspection, two young people are resident within this setting.

Relationships between young people and staff are often volatile. There is a pattern of young people regularly targeting staff, resulting in assault, damage, allegations and arrests. This level of disruption is often unprovoked. Likewise, relationships between peers is unpredictable. For example, young people regularly club together and this results in an escalation of bullying and further episodes of night-time disruption. Staff struggle to identify triggers for such behaviours and, as a result, the behaviour and atmosphere within the home can become precarious very quickly.

Care plans and placement planning arrangements are in place. Young people's needs are identified and some work to address these needs has taken place. However, arrangements for some young people are poor. For example, where a placement has been assessed as not meeting the young person's needs, the registered manager and the placing authority did not take effective action to secure a suitable future placement. Consequently, one young person remained in this inappropriate placement for over five months. This significant delay negatively impacted on the young person. This is evidenced in the decline in positive engagement with staff and an escalation of overall aggressive and abusive behaviours. Other residents within the home are equally affected by the frequent disruption within the home.

Placement plans detail the areas for work to be undertaken with young people. However, planned key-work sessions are inconsistent and are occasionally substituted with brief discussions regarding behaviours being exhibited. Since the last inspection in December 2018, young people are receiving little in the way of consistent direction in order to meet their placement targets. This is because staff are crisis-managing the needs of the young people and managing the delay in discharge for those inappropriately placed at the home.

Although there has been regular disruption within the home, this has not impacted on the daily educational routines in place for all young people resident. Educational attendance and attainment are consistently good, and for some young people educational attendance has significantly improved since becoming resident within the home. Feedback from educational providers is extremely positive, highlighting the support and encouragement staff offer young people on a consistent basis.

Contact arrangements are in place for all young people. Contact visits are regularly monitored and appropriate steps taken to increase or reduce contact where necessary. Staff form good relationships with parents and where possible engage them in the planning for care process.

Young people are provided with opportunities to undertake recreational activities. Due to conflicts within the home, staff work together to enable young people to undertake separate activities, including attending the park, gym, cinema and trampolining. Young people also enjoyed a separate short break to Wales. This proved successful, with young people enjoying a break away from the home and disruption.

Transition arrangements for young people leaving the home are unsatisfactory. This is because those young people who are identified as struggling within the placement have not been provided with a planned and supported transition to a more suitable setting. Consequently, young people's behaviours have continued to escalate and reach crisis

point, resulting in their arrest and immediate discharge to services and staff that they are not familiar with. The children's home and the contracting placing authority must work together to ensure a planned and supported transition for all young people placed in the home.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good**

The home operates under the theoretical framework of therapeutic crisis intervention (TCI). Staff receive training in TCI and regular guidance from senior managers, who are also internal trainers of this model.

Since the last inspection in December 2018, the home has encountered a number of disruptive episodes involving the young people accommodated at the home. These episodes have resulted in several arrests, assaults, damage and two discharges from the home.

Risk assessments are completed, taking into account historical experiences and trauma for young people, and identify significant behaviours and risks that are evident. However, risk assessments do not clearly guide staff in the management of such behaviours or risks. While it is evident that TCI trainers attend staff meetings and discuss individual behaviours with staff, this guidance is not transferred to the risk assessment and management of young people. Likewise, there is a lack of management oversight and analysis to identify increased risk or new behaviours that pose a risk. Consequently, young people's behaviours, including violence, aggression and bullying, are not consistently managed or addressed in order to generate and sustain positive change.

Staff work hard to try to manage young people who are regularly in conflict with each other or targeting staff. However, the lack of consistent management direction means that staff do not receive the support and guidance required to manage such volatile situations. For example, behaviour management strategies do not reflect the current behaviour exhibited by young people. Current strategies are ineffective. Although staff may implement a sanction, this has little impact on young people and is often not completed. Consequently, behaviour management systems do not provide young people with the tools they require to take responsibility for their actions or to regain control of their emotions or make positive change.

At the last inspection, a recommendation was made in respect of the management of bullying incidents in the home. Since that inspection, there has been an increase in such incidents. This is because there has been a significant delay in the placing authority finding a more appropriate setting for a young person assessed as being inappropriately placed. Staff have crisis managed each situation by attempting to protect the victim and unsuccessful attempts at redirection for the perpetrator. Further interventions such as additional staffing and one-to-one bedtime routines alleviated some tensions between young people, although, until their recent discharge from the home, the situation remained precarious.

Since the last full inspection in December 2018, there has been an increase in the level of allegations made against staff working in the home. This has resulted in the suspension of the registered manager and a residential worker and the brief

redeployment of a further member of the residential team. While matters are reported to social workers and investigated by senior managers, some instances are not referred to the local authority designated officer for review. The decision not to refer to the local authority designated officer is contrary to the home's child protection policy and national statutory guidance which clearly details the actions required by staff.

There has been an increase in the level of complaints made by young people in the home. The majority of complaints refer to the disruption and behaviour presented by one young person awaiting a new placement. Each complaint is reviewed, and a response is recorded, highlighting staff's attempts to minimise disruption in the home.

There are no incidents relating to young people being missing or absent from the home, involved in substance misuse or gang-related activity.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate**

The provider operates the home via a block contract with the local authority. There is a reluctance from the home's management to refuse referrals and admissions as the acting manager stated that there is a great deal of pressure from the authority to fill vacant beds. There is also a hesitancy to escalate concerns regarding the authority when suitable action is not taken to address concerns. For example, during a time of crisis in the home, the manager admitted a further young person, which served to escalate the disruption already prevalent in the home.

In order for the placements in the home to be successful and for positive progress to be made, the manager must be responsible for all placements made to the home. Where concerns arise, appropriate action must be taken without delay. Furthermore, there must be a solid partnership between the company and the authority to ensure the best outcomes for young people.

The monitoring and review of the work undertaken in the home is deficient across all areas. The manager has failed to assess the decline in behaviour presented by young people and the impact this has had upon all residents and staff. Consequently, there is an increase in significant incidents, including assaults on staff, bullying, damage, complaints and night-time disruption. There is a decrease in young people's positive engagement with staff, the provision of focused key-work sessions and progress towards reaching individual identified goals. The manager has failed to take effective action to address these concerns or guide and support staff in the positive day-to-day running of the home.

The supervision of staff is inconsistent. Records of supervision highlight that some sessions last for approximately 10 minutes, while others detail poor staff practice without disciplinary action or an action plan to address such practice. As a result, some staff are not clear on their role and purpose within the home. For example, boundaries between some staff and young people are blurred and this leads to confusion for some young people when challenged by staff. The manager has failed to ensure that the staff team is suitably supervised, guided and supported in their work.

External monitoring of the home requires improvement. Regulation 44 visits take place on a regular basis. However, reports from these visits do not reflect the issues faced by the home, such as the escalation in behaviours, delay in discharge and the impact on young people. Likewise, the local authority that contracts this company to run the home

does not visit regularly to have oversight of the issues the home faces, and yet the authority continues to make referrals to a home managing ongoing crisis.

The manager has not made an assessment or analysis of the cycle of events occurring in the home in order to plan for effective change. This means that the home cannot learn from previous incidents or adapt care practice to stop similar incidents occurring again.

## **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 differences 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:** SC381339

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Social Care Services (Clayton) Limited

**Registered provider address:** Social Care Services Group, 31 Shaw Road, Stockport SK4 4AG

**Responsible individual:** Stephen Davitt

**Registered manager:** John Hindley

## Inspectors

Maria McGranaghan, social care inspector

Dawn Parton, social care inspector

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