

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	25/11/2015
Unique reference number	SC381339
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 Davitt
Registered manager	Samantha Prescott
Inspector	Ceri Evans

Inspection date	24/11/2015
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

SC381339

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people are supported by a motivated and competent staff team who have genuine aspirations for them to achieve their full potential.
- A positive ethos of trust, respect and accountability is promoted by staff. Young people respond well to this and have developed good relationships with staff that they respect.
- The relationship between staff and young people is affectionate and nurturing. Young people benefit from knowing that staff really care about them.
- Young people spoken with during the inspection confirm they feel safe, secure and well cared for. They are protected from harm by staff who demonstrate a thorough understanding of their complex needs.
- Young people with a history of risk taking behaviour such as anti-social behaviour, criminal behaviour and going missing from the home are well supported. Risk taking behaviour has either stopped or reduced significantly.
- Detailed risk assessments and behaviour management plans underpin safe practice.
- Staff are led by an enthusiastic, knowledgeable and motivated manager. She is very child focused and has high aspirations for young people. Staff report feeling well supported in their roles. They share the manager's vision to improve the life experiences of young people.
- Managers understand the strength and weaknesses of the home and have a clear improvement plan to address identified shortfalls.
- Good management oversight ensures that the majority of shortfalls are identified and acted upon. However, as a result of this inspection areas for improvement have been identified. These mostly relate to records. To date, these shortfalls have not impacted negatively on the welfare of 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
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must ensure – (2)(b) 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. With specific reference to ensuring robust procedures for daily handovers between staff. Thus ensuring strong lines of communication and accountability.	06/01/2016
36: Children's case records The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which include information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child. Specifically, the date and circumstances of all incidents where a child goes missing from the home, including any information relating to the child's whereabouts during the period of absence. (Regulation 36(1)(a)(14))	06/01/2016

Recommendations

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

- The home's record of an incident or event must include a description of the action taken and the outcome of any resulting investigation. (The Guide page 63, 14.14)

- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. (The Guide page 45, 9.30)
- The registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the homes location and strategies for managing these (The Guide, page 64, 15.1)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to six young people of either gender, with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by a private organisation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/03/2015	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
11/06/2014	CH - Full	Good
28/01/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress
25/04/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Young people make good progress because they receive personalised and consistent support from staff they know well. They benefit enormously from living in a caring environment where staff are intuitive and treat them with unconditional positive regard. Staff are not overwhelmed by initial stumbling blocks or setbacks and make great efforts to help young people get back on track. Staff are clearly child centred and are very skilful at engaging young people. The home provides a firm foundation which enables young people to live out their childhood in a safe, secure and caring environment. One young person commented: 'I would not change a thing about here, this is the best care home I've lived in. It's good because of the staff, they are great and the manager is also brilliant. I'd definitely rate this place 10.5 out of 10.' All young people are making educational progress from their starting points. On the whole attendance has improved since moving into the home. Staff make good attempts at engaging young people in education. Evidence gathered at this inspection highlights that when young people refuse to attend school, quick action is taken and alternative arrangements are put in place to ensure minimum impact on learning. When there have been exclusions staff have a number of discussions and meetings with schools to ensure a successful reintegration. There is strong evidence that education is highly valued and promoted by staff. There is an aspirational culture within the home that helps young people aim high. Young people are given every opportunity to thrive educationally and as a result, they have genuine aspirations and goals for their future lives. The views of young people are central to the running of this home. Their views are constantly sought through house meetings, one to one sessions and consultation with the manager. Young people spoken with during the inspection confirm they have a voice and feel listened to by staff. Young people are also fully involved in their care planning and write their own care plans, outlining how they would like to be cared for, their likes and dislikes and what they hope to achieve. This ensures they feel valued and motivated to work towards their personal goals. Young people's health is generally very good. They are all registered with health care services and attend routine health appointments. Young people are encouraged to eat healthily and to understand the importance of maintaining good health. They are provided with good information and advice about a range of important health matters such as sexual health, smoking and the consequences of substance misuse. Although some of the young people engage in activities that might jeopardise their health, best efforts of staff have helped raise awareness and	

contribute to young people making more informed choices.

Staff view young people's identity and family origin as very important in developing positive self-esteem. Young people have good support from staff to maintain regular contact visits and keep in touch with those who are important to them. Staff also encourage young people to develop appropriate friendships and spend time with their friends. This means that young people have the same social experiences as those of their peers.

Individualised plans prepare young people for independence. They begin to learn a range of practical skills to help them maintain their living environment. Young people are given praise and incentives to develop their skills and demonstrate their competence. For example, one young person was supported to write a curriculum vitae, apply for a part time job and attend an interview. All of which provided opportunities for personal growth and development. Staff also encourage young people to participate in meaningful activities both in the home and the community. For example, participating in charity events, engaging in activities and going to places of interest. As a result, young people enjoy, have fun and develop confidence.

The home is a purpose built building, but every effort is made to make it homely and welcoming. It is situated in a good location and has easy access to public transport, shops and other amenities. This ensures that young people have good access to their local community and nearby towns.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
This home provides an environment where young people feel safe and are safe. Social workers and other professionals are confident that young people are safe within this home. Young people benefit from being cared for by staff who know them well and understand their vulnerabilities. Young people feel comfortable to speak with staff should they have any worries or concerns and are confident that matters would be addressed. Staff demonstrate unconditional positive regard for young people who have disruptive attachment patterns and can display harmful behaviour. The team take full account of the underlying trauma and respond effectively. Staff teach young people that making mistakes is a part of life. It is not disastrous and relationships can be sustained during challenging times. The ethos of the home is one of	

mutual respect, support, care and commitment. Staff are very experienced and have considerable skills in managing behaviour and embrace opportunities to help young people to reflect. Positive behaviour is encouraged, acknowledged and rewarded; young people are encouraged to have high expectation of themselves and their abilities.

Young people are helped and protected because staff have a good awareness of individual risks. Risk assessments are excellent. They are clear, detailed and regularly updated. Staff are very aware of potential risks and understand how to prevent them. Staff engage young people in regular key work sessions targeting specific areas of difficulties and vulnerability. This has helped young people reflect upon their behaviour and consider ways of making safer, more socially acceptable choices. Staff also use incentives to encourage young people to take responsibility for improving their behaviour. Steady improvements have been made, thus resulting in a happier and safer environment.

Staff are trained in the appropriate use of physical restraint. Incidents of restraint are very rare and only used as a last resort. The current group of young people have not needed this type of intervention and are enjoying settled placements.

The dynamics of group living are carefully assessed and monitored by staff. There is a zero tolerance approach to bullying and staff are quick to respond to any issues between young people. Young people understand that bullying is not acceptable and they are confident that staff would act should any incidents occur. This enables young people to live in an environment that is secure and non-threatening, which further promotes their sense of wellbeing.

There have been incidents of young people going missing. When this occurs staff take swift action and go out and actively search known areas, make several attempts to contact them and go out and collect them when they are located. The home is resourced to ensure that staff can spend time looking for young people when they are missing and return them home. While good practice is noted in relation to staff action, records of missing from home incidents are less robust and not completed with sufficient rigour. Not all episodes have been recorded and overall they lack clarity in relation to what action has been taken, where they were located and the time of their return. This is a breach in regulation and does not accurately reflect the action taken by staff in practice.

The home has forged good links with other professionals to address missing from care concerns. One police officer stated: 'In relation to missing, staff respond appropriately and recently we have seen a reduction in repeat calls from the home.' While it is extremely positive to see that missing incidents have reduced,

the arrangements for missing from home return interviews is less positive. Not enough has been done to ensure young people have the opportunity to speak to an independent person following their return to placement. This is a missed opportunity to support young people and to help uncover information that could protect them in the future. The manager has acknowledged this shortfall and is currently reviewing the process for return interviews.

Investigations into complaints and serious incidents are handled fairly and undertaken promptly by the manager. The manager ensures that the relevant partner agencies are informed and appropriate action is taken. However, significant incident records are not always clear and do not provide a full oversight of the incident, action taken and the outcome of any resulting investigation. While entirely appropriate action is taken, records made in this way lack clarity, and do not stand up to scrutiny in an event of a complaint or further investigation.

The home's location risk assessment is compiled in a file with lots of cross referenced information about potential risks within the area. The manager has consulted with appropriate professionals and gathered lots of valuable information. However, the assessment is less clear in relation to the responses required by staff to minimise those risks. To date, this has not impacted negatively on young people; this is because staff know the young people and area very well. That said the manner in which the assessment has been completed is not best practice and could be improved.

The recruitment of staff is sufficiently robust. The manager follows agreed procedures to ensure the thorough scrutiny of applicants prior to their employment in the home. This prevents unsuitable people from being able to work with young people. There is a good system in place for responding to allegations and suspicion of harm. Staff fully understand their safeguarding responsibilities; good quality training enables them to respond effectively to child protection concerns.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The manager is suitably qualified and experienced, and provides the home with visible leadership which promotes good quality of care and positive experiences for	

young people. The manager maintains a thorough oversight of care practices and has an excellent understanding of the individual needs of the young people accommodated in the home. Leaders have high expectations with regard to the level of care and support young people should receive and these expectations are fully understood by the staff team. As a result, the team are motivated and channel their efforts effectively.

The manager ensures that the staffing levels are sufficient in the home and adapts the rota in order to meet the individual needs of the young people. There is a broad range of experience and skills to meet the everyday challenges of caring for children. Generally, communication is very good within the home and staff are able to share their views in team meetings, supervision and informal discussions. However, the formal handover between staff at the end of their shift is less robust. There is little evidence that key information has been passed on and there are no clear lines of accountability in relation to roles. To date, this has not impacted seriously on practice. This is because staff know young people well. That said, it is not good practice and has the potential to lead to unclear roles, responsibilities and potentially information not being passed on to the relevant people.

Staff confirm that they receive very good support from managers and senior staff. Regular formal supervision gives them the opportunity to discuss their work and the care and well-being of young people. They also have access to guidance from managers outside of these formal meetings. This ensures that they are fully supported to maintain a good standard of care in the home. Staff report that they work well together and say that morale in the team is very good; which is evident to young people by the positive atmosphere in the home.

Staff are enthusiastic about their development and are given regular opportunities to develop their practice through attending training events. This includes core training, such as safeguarding, positive parenting as well as any other additional training brought in to address specific areas of need. Training is ongoing and regular opportunities are in place to refresh old skills and develop new ones in line with updated regulation, policy and research. This ensures that care practice is informed by, and in line with, current legislative frameworks.

The manager undertakes regular monitoring of the home to ensure it operates in accordance with the Statement of Purpose. She makes good use of monitoring and quality assurance systems which focus on progress and the overall experiences of young people. Monthly reports provide a detailed overview of the home, and clearly identify areas for improvement. Consultation with young people, parents and social workers directly influence the progress of the home. Evidence gathered at this inspection indicates that the manager takes appropriate steps to rectify shortfalls quickly, thereby ensuring that the needs of the children remain at the heart of the home.

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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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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