

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	08/12/2015
Unique reference number	SC386810
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Crossway Services Limited
Registered person address	c/o, 298 St. Marys Road, Garston, LIVERPOOL, L19 0NQ

Responsible individual	Pauline Croft
Registered manager	Kathleen Mitchell
Inspector	Pam Nuckley

Inspection date	08/12/2015
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	Requires improvement
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.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC386810

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is requires improvement because:

- The young person's progress has declined in several areas even though the manager and staff have taken swift action to address each concern.
- Restrictions to the young person's contact are not included in their plans. This does not ensure staff know the action to take in the event of an incident.
- A significant safeguarding incident was not reported timely to the appropriate safeguarding professionals. As a result, police time was wasted and an opportunity for them to take decisive action was missed.
- External monitoring of the home is ineffective because the independent visitor does not provided the service with a clear evaluation of the quality of care in the home.

The children's home strengths

- The young person said this was a good home. She said the excellent support and relationships she has with staff are getting her through a difficult period in her life.
- The home has taken decisive action in addressing each concern as it has rose. For example, appointments with health professionals have been quickly made when concerns have risen around the young person's mental and emotional health.
- Good risk assessments and behaviour management plans support staff to deal with the ongoing concerns effectively. They are updated regularly when new information is known. This means that staff work consistently with the young person.
- The manager has challenged the local authority and education services to ensure that the young person has an educational placement in place.
- Staff ensure that they have close working relationships with parents and significant others. This means that the young person can continue to see people that are important to her.
- Professional speak highly of the home. The young person's social worker said, 'I hold this home in high regard. Although things are not going well at this moment, this is not down to them and I am confident that she will get through this difficult period.'
- There is a well-qualified, experienced and dedicated manager in place. She strives to continue to develop the service, supports staff very well and has the best interests of young people at the heart of the home.

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: (2) (a) (vi) ensure that staff take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. This is specifically in relation to taking prompt action when staff become aware of specific information.	31/01/2016

Recommendations

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

- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of the information from independent monitoring to ensure continuous improvement. This is specifically in relation to the independent visitor providing a clear evaluation of the service, home and records. (The Guide to the Quality Standards page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- ensure that staff assess any restrictions to contact and that they are highlighted within the young person's plans to safeguard them or promote their welfare. (The Guide to the Quality Standards page 58, paragraph 11.16)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home can accommodated one young person with behavioural and emotional difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/07/2015	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
21/01/2015	CH - Full	Good
27/08/2014	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
12/03/2014	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	requires improvement
The young person said this was a good home, where she felt happy and safe. She said, 'I have been struggling lately but staff have been brilliant and I know they are here for me.' The young person has been at this home for a significant period. Prior to September 2015, she was making good progress across all areas. In September she was excluded from school. In conjunction with this, she began therapy for post-traumatic stress syndrome. However, she felt unable to continue with the therapy sessions. Therefore, unresolved issues have affected her emotional and mental health meaning she has become more withdrawn, has stopped engaging in activities and has placed herself at risk. The young person's social worker said, 'I cannot fault this service. Up to September she was making excellent progress. Out of all of my caseload this is one that I am confident about.' She continued to say, 'Although she has declined in her progress this is not down to the home but because of other circumstances. She continues to receive excellent support from the home and has very recently shown that this support is invaluable to her.' The young person was attending a mainstream school. Over the years, effective collaborative work between the school and the home's staff ensured good attendance with staff supporting the school by providing support at break and lunch times. But, due to disengagement and disruption in class the school made the decision to exclude her because they felt they could not keep her safe. The manager worked closely with the virtual head of education and the local authority to secure good arrangements for education whilst an alternative education placement is found. For example, pupil premium money was used to provide a music teacher for singing lessons. But, the teacher has cancelled several appointments and the young person quickly refused to engage in home tutoring. The manager is proactive in identifying suitable educational placements and continues to advocate strongly on the young person's behalf with the local authority. This has meant another education placement has been found. The young person is due to visit and start in the new year. In conjunction with this, staff have discussed the importance of education with her and she has very recently started to engage with the home tutor again. The young person said, 'It has been difficult but I am going to try. I want a good education because I want to be a police officer when I am older.'	

Shortly after the young person's therapy started she began isolating herself from staff, staying in her room and her appetite decreased. Staff were concerned and took appropriate action; arranging appointments at the doctors and initiating referrals to appropriate mental health services. As a result, her physical health was thoroughly checked. The assessment by the child adolescent mental health (CAMH's) team has been challenged by the local authority and a recent strategy meeting has identified input from a specialised service is necessary. In addition to this, the young person has struggled with her identity. The home has sought professional services for her to explore this. The young person has stereotypical ideas about how different people are perceived. Staff have worked with her on this and continue to encourage her to explore her own image and identity through expressing herself through clothes, music, and how she presents herself. They give her clear information, look at positive role models and challenge her views of stereotyping. This means that she is learning that it is ok to be different but that there is no set idea of what someone looks like or how they act. Staff receive good training around health matters which includes healthy eating, food hygiene, administering medication and first aid. This means that they are confident in supporting the young person to eat healthily and that they receive their medication in line with their prescription.

The young person said that their views, wishes and feelings are listened to and incorporated into daily life within the home. She said, 'They always ask my opinion, what I want, what's happened at certain meetings and give me good advice. I know what the plan is and what I need to do.' She continued to say, 'They have been very honest about things so I know I have to do better to stay here and I really want to stay because I love it here.' She said that she had no issues about the home but knew several people who she could contact, if she wished to raise a concern. This means young person can get support or advice from people independent from the home.

There is a range of activities and leisure pursuits offered to young people. The young person said that she had a good summer holiday period, which included many activities and a week away which she thoroughly enjoyed. The young person said, 'I went to a concert of my favourite singer. It was fantastic. The staff knew she was visiting a local store to sign merchandise. I went and got her autograph. It is my most prized item.' Since September, she has stopped attending the local youth club and there was a short period when she would not engage in any activity. However, recently she has enjoyed shopping trips to Liverpool, the science museum and watching the Christmas lights being switched on in the local community.

Staff work closely with young people, parents and significant others to ensure that relationships are maintained and improved. Consequently, the young person is seeing family members on an increasingly regular basis. She has bought Christmas presents for her family and is looking forward to spending some time with them over the holiday period. A good contact plan shows the arrangements, times and

dates that have been agreed by all parties concerned. But, it does not explicitly show any restrictions that have been identified by the local authority regarding significant unsuitable adults. This means that staff do not have all the information available to them to take appropriate action if necessary.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement
The young person said that they were safe at this home but also recognised that they have put themselves at risk within the community. She said, 'I know staff are concerned and worried about me because they tell me all the time. Things have just been difficult lately.' She continued to say that staff are open and honest and consistently discuss safety issues with her. The young person said, 'Staff here are brilliant. We have good relationships and I can talk to them about most things.' Several professionals commented on the excellent relationships within the home. One professional said, 'It is evident that they make good, honest and trusting relationships with children. Another said, 'I believe that the relationships they make is the basis of the good practice within this home. I have seen this with young people I have placed overtime.' A staff member said, 'When young people are first placed, the relationships we make are based on honesty, trust and mutual respect. This is embedded in practice and they learn that we are here to help them. Although, over the last three weeks she has struggled to verbalise what she is feeling, with continued support she is now discussing some really traumatic and sensitive information with us. Therefore, we are able to support her and get the help she needs.' Over the last three weeks, the young person has put herself at significant risk of harm. She has left the home on numerous occasions without telling staff where she is going. Staff have been extremely proactive in searching for her and this has included bringing in additional staff from other homes within the company to help them search the local community. On several occasions, they have found her and encouraged her to come home with them. When they have been unable to locate her, they have followed the home's missing from home protocol and informed all parties. The social worker said, 'They have done everything possible to prevent her from leaving, follow her and follow procedures. The home is excellent at keeping me informed and arranging return interviews and strategy meetings. On one occasion, the young person told staff about an incident that had occurred. Decisive action was taken and all professionals were informed. A safeguarding professional said, 'We have been really impressed with the action taken by the home and the soft intelligence that they have provided us with.' This meant that the young	

person received prompt medical treatment, support and that the police were able to put protocols in place. However, a related incident happened a few days later. The member of staff did not record the incident or inform the police until the next day. A safeguarding police officer said, 'We received the information by a third party. Therefore, we did not have the correct information. We have wasted valuable time looking at the wrong information and will now have to revisit this. We also lost an opportunity to take immediate action to protect the young person and other young people within the community.' The police said this was unusual for the home but is a significant safeguarding shortfall that has affected outcomes for young people. The manager has taken immediate action to address this shortfall with the person responsible. In addition to this, the manager has made a referral to the child sexual exploitation team to ensure that all parties are aware of the incident, the risk and to get the necessary support for the young person.

In contrast to this, the young person told staff that she had been able to access over 18 material, on iPads and lap tops in large supermarkets. The manager raised this concern with the duty managers from two known supermarkets. They thanked her for the information, took them off the shelves, and are now looking at their own on-line safety procedures. The manager also made the child exploitation on-line protection officer aware of this issue. They were not aware of this and thanked the manager for this information. They are going to inform all providers within the area and complete an investigation into this. This quick action, response and sharing of information will assist the community, other providers and stores to keep young people safe.

Care plans and placement plans identify individual needs, routines, daily living, concerns and risks. They are incorporated into a young person's behaviour management plan. There are good individual risk assessments in place that outline the history of concerns, emerging risks, triggers, strategies and actions for staff to take. These documents are regularly reviewed, amended and shared. This ensures that staff are able to work consistently with the young person and they receive the same responses.

The young person has not been restrained whilst at this home. But, staff are fully trained in being able to hold a young person safely if necessary. The young person's behaviour within the home is very good. She is often rewarded for this with meals out, beauty products or additional clothing money. There is minimal use of negative consequences because the young person has the opportunity to make things right or apologise. When they are applied, the young person said they are fair and proportionate.

There have been no new staff appointed at this home. At the last inspection staff records were found to be robust. Therefore, young people are cared for by staff that know them well.

A range of health and safety checks are completed to assess whether there are

any hazards, which could pose a risk to young people and staff. The young person and staff take part in regular fire drills to ensure that they can evacuate the home safely in the event of an emergency. All visitors to the home are taken through the procedure. These measures help to continually ensure that everyone lives and works in a safe environment.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
There is a well-qualified and experienced manager in place. She was registered with Ofsted in 2006 and manages two single placement homes. She divides her time equally between them and is well supported by a senior staff member and a consistent, stable staff team. The homes Statement of Purpose reflects the service offered at this home. Professionals say that the ethos of the home is evident in the good outcomes for the young person. Young people's reviews take place regularly. Young people said they fully understood their care plan and were confident that they could influence the plan. All staff are qualified in caring for young people at Level 3. One staff has completed the Level 5 in caring for young people and other staff have the opportunity to complete this as part of their development. Staff say that the supervision, training and development opportunities that they receive support them to give good, consistent care to young people. Staff describe the manager as 'fair', 'approachable', and 'knowledgeable'. A strong theme was apparent of being able to discuss any issues whether, personal, of practice or about young people, openly and honestly with the manager. Staff said they valued her opinion and that she could often give them a better understanding of a situation or look at the issue impartially. They contributed this level of support to their success in working with young people. Staff say that staff meetings are frequent and are a forum to discuss practice issues, developments in the home, young people's progress and any support that they require. Staff were aware of the recent changes within the Children's Homes Regulations 2015 and the supporting Children's Guide. As a result, staff are kept up to date with changes within legislation and are looking at changes that may need to be made in their paperwork. For example, the homes Statement of	

Purpose has recently been updated to reflect these changes.

Staff have received all mandatory training which is refreshed within time scales. The company has appointed a senior member of staff to oversee all training needs of staff. Although in its infancy stage, she has devised a system that will highlight when training requires refreshing but also looks at staff development or highlights that they need additional support in some areas. She has the contacts and resources to be able to address any shortfall or development need. As a result, staff say that training opportunities have significantly improved and through the appraisal system they have been able to access management courses. They said that they welcome the opportunity to develop and progress within the company.

The homes notification system is robust. As a result, all serious events are reported promptly to all agencies. The home works well with a variety of professionals such as safeguarding officers, the police, social workers and placing authorities to ensure young people receive the best care possible. The manager has successfully challenged professionals when she has believed that more could be done or when things are not being completed quickly enough. For example, she has challenged the local authority to identify an educational provision for the young person. This means that the young person will not be out of education for a long period of time.

An independent visitor monitors the home on a monthly basis. Ofsted receives these timely. But, these reports lack evaluation of the records sampled. For example, they often give a list of dates rather than a narrative on the quality of the recordings or the action taken. This does not assist the manager to make improvements within the home or to assess where development is needed. The manager also completes a similar report on a six monthly basis. She uses this document well to carry over any actions noted into her development plan for the ongoing improvement of the home. The development plan is discussed on a monthly basis within staff meetings and staff are able to contribute to it. She strives to seek independent feedback from a range of professionals, parents, stakeholders and young people to incorporate the views, suggestions and findings into her development plan to improve the quality of care within the home.

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*.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*, which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2015