

Children's home – Interim inspection

Inspection date	08/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC397112
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Alliance Care and Education Limited
Registered provider address	Brow Top Farm, Quernmore, Lancaster LA2 0QW

Responsible individual	Andrew Taylor
Registered manager	James Dawson
Inspector	Marina Tully

Inspection date	08/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness. Young people continue to thrive from their starting points because of staff's consistent high level of care and support. Professionals speak highly of the service. A commissioning officer said, 'The young person has progressed really well considering her starting point. The home has put in enhanced support and we are really happy with how things are going. The home's documentation is robust and the manager takes on board any suggestions that we make. I was really impressed when I visited the home and have nothing bad to report.' Young people's health improves as a result of living in this home. The manager ensures that young people are supported physically and emotionally to attend all health appointments and medical procedures. This has included the manager sitting alongside a young person during complex dental treatment. The young person valued this exceptional level of care and support, which is reflected in her comments, 'I am so afraid of needles and would not go to the dentist. [Name of the registered manager] came with me and held my hand all the way through. I made his hand turn blue, but I did it!' Young people are supported very well to attend and achieve at school. They all attend suitable provision that meets their individual needs. Issues with school attendance are addressed effectively. Young people with a long history of poor school attendance and exclusions are now attending school regularly, and this demonstrates significant progress from their starting points. Staff support young people to become independent by teaching them self-care skills, and by building young people's confidence and emotional resilience. One young person is excelling in his college course and is learning how to drive; these achievements are down to the staff team's diligent guidance and support. Furthermore, young people are helped to rebuild positive relationships with their families, which has enabled them to be reunited with their families when they move on from the home. Without a doubt, young people's safety is a priority at this home. Staff work in partnership with a range of safeguarding professionals including the police, social workers, missing from care co-ordinators, and child sexual exploitation teams. This effective partnership working is ensuring that all relevant agencies are alert to any	

potential risk and work collaboratively to minimise harm.

Staff's in-depth knowledge and understanding of young people's needs, strengths and vulnerabilities is ensuring that young people are safe and feel safe. This is reflected in a parent's comments, 'Staff and the manager are doing a marvellous job. They are keeping her safe and maintaining her welfare.' Young people also confirmed that they feel safe living in the home.

Staff follow safeguarding procedures consistently, such as the local missing from care protocol. Concerns that are more serious are escalated to strategy meetings, which allows a multi-agency response to serious safeguarding matters. However, some young people's risk assessments had not been updated to reflect emerging patterns of risk, such as going missing with other peers living at the home, potential child sexual exploitation and cannabis use. This is largely a recording issue that, to date, has not affected young people's welfare or safety, but has the potential to do so. Additionally, not all key work sessions provided by staff are targeted to address the individual's specific safeguarding concerns. Consequently, staff miss valuable opportunities to support young people to understand their own vulnerabilities and to learn how to keep themselves safe.

Behaviour management strategies are effective. The use of rewards and praise far outweigh the use of sanctions. Restraint is used as a last resort and for safeguarding purposes only. Although restraint records have improved and now identify clearly the members of staff involved, on one occasion an authorised person had not evaluated a restraint record, and there was no record of the young person's views being sought. Further improvements in the recording of all restraints will enhance young people's safety by ensuring objective scrutiny of each incident.

All requirements from the previous inspection have been sufficiently addressed. The manager's system for monitoring the home's records has improved significantly. Records now document clearly the date and the author of the record, which, in turn, strengthens the monitoring of young people's progress. However, the independent monitoring of the service is not robust. The recent monthly monitoring visits required under regulation 44 have not consistently provided a rigorous evaluation of the care and protection provided in the home. A recommendation has been raised to enhance independent scrutiny of the home and, thus, advance monitoring systems further.

The home has revised its system for recording the administration of all medication, to ensure that the record includes when a young person refuses to take their prescribed medication. This supports the home's auditing of medication and the monitoring of young people's specific health needs.

Shortfalls in staff recruitment have been satisfactorily addressed, specifically in relation to obtaining and verifying staff references. Improvements in pre-employment vetting will increase young people's safety by only allowing suitable people to work in the home. Additionally, the updated locality assessment now considers all potential risks in the local area and identifies measures to prevent

potential harm.

Overall, the registered manager has extremely high aspirations for all young people in his care. He goes above and beyond to ensure that they are happy, safe and making measurable progress. He is very much a 'hands on' manager and leads his team by example. He is enthusiastic, committed and demonstrates capacity to drive the service forward and secure constant improvement.

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care and accommodation for four young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/12/2016	Full	Good
24/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
06/10/2015	Full	Good
09/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Statutory requirement

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must ensure that, within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ('the authorised person'), has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and, within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii)(C))	08/03/2017

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Staff should support children to be aware of and manage their own safety, both inside and outside of the home, to the extent that any good parent would. Staff should help children to understand how to protect themselves, feel protected and be protected from significant harm. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42-43, paragraphs 9.5 and 9.9)
- Ensure that 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)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection.

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 that 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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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 0300 123 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, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for children looked after 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 2017