

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	09/08/2016
Unique reference number	SC400355
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Social Care Services (Clayton) Limited
Registered provider address	31 Shaw Road, Stockport, Cheshire SK4 4AG

Responsible individual	Stephen Davitt
Registered manager	John Hindley
Inspector	Ceri Evans

Inspection date	09/08/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained 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

SC400355

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people enjoy very settled placements and make good progress from their starting points.
- The house feels like a family home. It is a friendly and welcoming environment where young people feel relaxed, settled and happy.
- Staff have created a very nurturing environment in which young people are very well supported. This enables young people to build trusted and secure relationships with their caregivers.
- Staff provide a highly nurturing, caring and homely environment. They work in a consistent manner to develop and support the young people so that they achieve positive outcomes.
- Young people feel very safe and are protected by skilled and proactive staff who prioritise the safety and well-being of young people.
- The manager provides visible leadership to the staff team and demonstrates a strong commitment to driving forward improvements in the home.
- The manager, along with the staff team, can clearly demonstrate ambition for young people. There is a genuine drive to ensure that young people are given every opportunity to achieve their full potential.
- Monitoring of young people's progress and development is detailed and the manager has a good understanding of the strengths of the home and areas for development. However, the following shortfalls require attention: ensure that incident records offer a factual account of the event, gaining the views of young people, parents and professionals for staff appraisals, and touch up damaged paintwork around the home. None of these shortfalls has had a significant impact on young people's welfare or safety.

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 within the given timescales.

N/A

Recommendations

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

- Provide a homely environment. In particular, ensure that the home is well-maintained and decorated. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Records must be kept detailing all individual incidents when children go missing from the home. These records must include a factual account of the action taken by staff ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.31)
- All staff must have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. This appraisal should take into account, where reasonable and practical, the views of young people and children in the home, families, and professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a privately run children's home that provides care and accommodation for up to three young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13/05/2015	Full	Good
10/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/10/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
This home has made a difference in the lives of young people who currently live there. Staff are good role models and have a parent-like approach to their care. Staff members are understanding, sympathetic, comforting and consistent. They provide lots of individual attention, which helps to promote young people's sense of well-being and belonging, and gives them good opportunities to form and develop appropriate attachments. As one social worker confirmed: '[Name of young person] is much calmer and very settled because staff respond so well to her. They have fun with her and support her emotionally, being aware of when she needs space and allowing for this. This has enabled her to make progress emotionally, which is very positive for a child who has been very unsettled at several previous placements.' Staff are diligent and work hard to help young people develop their true potential. They are not daunted by setbacks or failures and are persistent in their efforts to provide opportunities for young people to succeed. A placing social worker commented: 'Staff take everything in their stride and don't react to testing behaviours. They are clear and consistent with [name of young person] and keep her safe at all times. She has had a number of placement disruptions, but any blips or setbacks are not blown out of proportion and staff deal with matters appropriately.' Overall, the experience of living in this home has enabled young people to develop genuine attachments, emotional security, happiness and permission to enjoy their childhood. They are encouraged to engage in a variety of activities both in the home and the wider community. Recent examples of activities include playing board games, swimming, youth clubs and horse riding, and going on days out to places of interest. Their smallest achievements are celebrated, helping young people to feel good about themselves. In addition, community activities enable young people to develop friendships, along with helping them to develop their communication and social skills. An unquestionable strength of the home is the staff team's ability to create an environment that replicates 'family life.' There was clear evidence throughout the inspection of really good practice. For example, staff and young people play games as a 'family unit', eat together and exchange mutually respectful banter with one another. These experiences reinforce the message that the adults closest to them care and enjoy spending time with the young people.	

Young people's education is highly valued by staff and engagement in daily education is expected and promoted. For example, staff ensure that firm routines are established from the onset of placement to reaffirm the message that education is important. On occasions, when young people have difficulties attending or within school, staff take action and the barriers to participation are managed and addressed in conjunction with teachers. This shared approach ensures that young people are aware that professionals are working together in their best interests.

Staff help young people to understand the importance of maintaining good physical health. They encourage them to engage in an active lifestyle and to eat a balanced diet, as explained by one young person who said: 'Tonight we're having chicken and salad – it's healthy, but we're going to have a takeaway on Saturday night as a treat.' Staff are vigilant in relation to identifying healthcare needs and ensuring prompt attention and access to services as required. This ensures that young people stay fit and healthy.

In response to a previous requirement, some improvements have been made to the physical environment of the home. That said, further attention is required. There is exposed wood on the bannister and parts of the home require redecoration. Furthermore, window restrictors need to be repaired or removed. More positively, young people are involved in choosing the colour schemes and décor of their bedrooms. Some have even helped to redecorate their rooms. Such involvement helps young people to develop a sense of pride in the environment that they have helped to create. It also helps them to feel at home.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people say that they feel safe, secure and well cared for. They are protected from harm by a committed staff group who demonstrate a thorough understanding of their needs. Staff are not overwhelmed when young people occasionally place themselves at risk, and they take immediate appropriate action to ensure their safety. Staff respond effectively to incidents and are attuned to warning signs, triggers or changes in behaviour that may indicate potential harm. The home has a comprehensive safeguarding policy that is fully implemented in practice by staff. The protection and safety of young people are regularly discussed in supervision, handovers, team meetings and individual sessions. As a result, staff are confident and skilful and demonstrate sound knowledge of safeguarding practices that further protect young people from harm.	

Young people are increasingly safe as a result of the care afforded to them by the manager and staff team. Staff provide young people with a high level of support and encourage them to self-regulate their emotions through role modelling, individual sessions and reflection. Evidence gathered at this inspection highlights that young people are becoming more self-aware and have started to understand the impact of their harmful behaviour. Positive behaviour is rewarded and sanctions help young people learn that socially acceptable behaviour can lead to improved prospects. A young person said: 'I like staff because they are fair and the rules are fair. I have incentives around my behaviour. I'm ok with that and I've done well.'

Physical restraint has been used, but only when absolutely necessary. All staff are appropriately trained in the use of physical restraint and when it has been used, it has been appropriately managed. A record of each restraint is maintained. This contains the necessary information. This means that the manager maintains a full overview of the incident to ensure that it was carried out appropriately.

Risk-taking behaviour such as going missing from home is well managed by staff. There are good systems in place for responding to missing-from-care episodes. Staff work closely with relevant agencies to try to reduce the risk of harm. They escalate concerns appropriately in consultation with partners so that strategy and statutory review meetings are followed by action to safeguard the young people. The arrangements for return-to-home interviews are appropriate. This ensures that young people have the opportunity to speak to an independent person following their return to placement. While good practice is noted in relation to staff action, missing records are less robust and are not completed with sufficient rigor. Some records lack factual detail. Records made in this way lack clarity and do not stand up to scrutiny in the event of an investigation or complaint. More positively, the manager has acknowledged this shortfall and is in the process of identifying appropriate development opportunities to enhance recording practice within the home.

Good systems are in place for responding to allegations or suspicion of harm. Records demonstrate that staff apply rigour to the management of incidents and that investigations into allegations or concerns about staff practice are handled fairly, quickly and in consultation with the appropriate external agencies. This provides effective protection for young people.

There are well-established and effective arrangements in place for recruiting staff. Records demonstrate that the manager undertakes robust recruitment and selection procedures. Appropriate checks and references are undertaken prior to employment. This means that, as far as possible, young people are protected from unsuitable adults.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
Young people benefit from living in an effectively managed home. The manager was registered with Ofsted in September 2011. He has the relevant management qualifications to undertake the role and has worked in social care for many years. He provides clear and inspirational leadership and demonstrates high expectations of himself, staff and young people. The manager, along with the staff team, ensures that the young people are definitely at the heart of the home. Their development needs are priorities in a very child-centred and nurturing environment. New team members are inducted well and receive good support from the registered manager. They are provided with a range of opportunities to develop their understanding and are able to apply this in their day-to-day practice. Experienced staff continue to receive refresher training in key areas such as first aid, safeguarding and physical restraint. Staff also undertake more specialised training in respect of issues that affect the young people for whom they are caring. This ensures that the team remains well equipped to meet the individual needs of young people. All staff receive regular supervision that is focused on their professional development and the progress young people make. Staff say that supervision is helpful in assisting them to develop their knowledge, skills and practice. Annual appraisals offer a good level of detail in relation to aims and objectives, but fail to reflect the views of young people, families and professionals who come into contact with the service. This is a missed opportunity to undertake a more holistic overview of performance. The manager undertakes regular monitoring of the home to ensure that it operates in accordance with its statement of purpose. Both internal and external monitoring systems provide for regular consultation with young people, parents and professionals. This ensures that the quality of the service continues to be assessed and analysed in order to drive improvements. Leaders and managers have a realistic understanding of the strengths of the service and promptly address areas where improvements can be made. The home continues to use a detailed development plan to drive forward further improvements. This ensures that young people remain at the heart of the home and receive the best possible care. To conclude, the home has sustained a good performance and continues to offer a good quality of care. The manager is committed to ongoing development and is keen to ensure that young people have every opportunity to achieve their full potential.	

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 the '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 children looked after 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 whom 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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