

SC400355

Registered provider: Social Care Services (Clayton) Limited

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

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

Inspection date: 11 January 2018

Judgement at last inspection: Requires improvement to be good

Date of last inspection: 24 May 2017

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 required improvement to be good at the last full inspection.

At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness.

Two young people have left the home since the last inspection. In one case, the young person moved shortly after the inspection to a more appropriate placement that could better meet his needs. The home had served notice on the placement, recognising the negative impact that this young person was having on others living in the home. The two remaining young people are settled and have made good progress since the last inspection.

A second young person had a well-planned move home, following her successful progress across all areas of development. The home was actively involved in the young person's transition and worked well with the young person, her family and partner agencies. Staff and young people have contributed to a memory book for her, sending warm messages and photographs which focus on the many positive experiences she had while living in the home.

The comfortable accommodation and relaxed atmosphere provide a homely and secure environment in which young people report that they feel safe. One young person has been admitted to the home in recent weeks. He was made welcome, and is settled and content. He described the home as 'good', saying: 'They give me a roof over my head. They listen to me and help me, like they help me get to school, which is a long way... I feel comfortable here.' The manager carried out a detailed impact risk assessment prior to the young person's admission, focusing on his compatibility with the young person already living in the home and the skills of the staff team in meeting his needs.

Young people benefit from positive behaviour support and nurture from the staff team. They recognise that staff care about them and they enjoy spending time with staff. One said: 'This is a good home. It's pretty chilled. Staff are really supportive. And we do loads of activities... They help me when I feel upset. They give me cuddles and hugs and head massages. They are funny.'

The quality of individual work is good. Key-worker sessions are recorded and demonstrate that matters of concern to each young person are discussed in an age-appropriate way. There is a focus on helping young people to reflect on their attitudes and behaviour and to have high aspirations for the future. Through house group meetings, young people are encouraged to have a say in the running of the home and planning their day-to-day experiences. They have many opportunities to comment on their care and to raise any concerns or discuss matters of importance to them.

The leadership and management of the home are improving. Better monitoring of practice and records enables the manager to identify and address areas for improvement quickly. Staff have the opportunity to reflect on and improve the quality of their work. For example, the manager provides appropriate professional challenge through one-to-one meetings, when he considers that strategies used to manage children's behaviour have fallen short of good practice. This helps the whole staff team to stay focused on delivering high-quality care that meets children's individual needs.

There has been a significant reduction in the number of serious incidents notified to Ofsted since the last inspection. Challenging behaviour is well managed, without criminalising children who assault staff when they struggle to manage their emotions. Methods for helping young people to stay in control of their anger and anxieties and to keep calm are consistently well applied and often effective. The home seeks specialist help for young people appropriately, through referral to the child and adolescent mental health service or other emotional support services.

The manager and independent visitor monitor incidents of restraint and measures of control effectively. Records demonstrate that restraint is used appropriately and only as a last resort to prevent serious harm or damage. Staff help young people to reflect on incidents through life-space interviews or key-worker sessions. This helps young people to consider and learn more appropriate strategies for dealing with their emotions.

Young people are very well supported to attend school and their engagement with education is much improved since their admission to the home. The staff have a good understanding of young people's needs. For the most part, they work in close

collaboration with partner agencies. This ensures that young people usually receive the support and specialist advice that they need.

The home does not always follow up on health concerns, so there are gaps in the staff team's understanding of a young person's health and medication needs. On one occasion, a young person was not administered their prescribed medicine, based on a decision taken by the manager, without reference to a health professional. While no negative consequences ensued, such practice could jeopardise the young person's health.

Young people who smoke are advised to do so off the premises. Not enough is done to discourage smoking of cigarettes and cannabis. Consequently, some young people continue to smoke both.

The requirements and recommendations raised at the last inspection have been mostly met. However, in some instances, more work needs to be done. Missing-from-home records are held on children's files but do not contain all the relevant information relating to the incident, although this information is held elsewhere in the home's records. While this breach in regulation has no impact on children's welfare, the requirement is only partially met and is therefore repeated.

There are currently no incidents of bullying between the young people living in the home. Previous bullying was robustly addressed through key-worker sessions, appropriate challenge and restorative justice meetings. Young people were encouraged and given opportunities to build more positive relationships and to develop tolerance and understanding of each other's needs. This was successful in reducing the level of bullying in the home and promoting improved relationships between young people.

Robust matching of young people is evident, and, for the most part, risk management plans guide staff in how to mitigate risks to children's safety and welfare. However, there are some shortfalls in these documents. For example, not all known risks are addressed. This does not ensure that staff have a safe and robust response to young people's dangerous risk-taking behaviour.

The manager has taken swift and appropriate action in response to an allegation of abuse. He has worked in effective collaboration with safeguarding professionals and has maintained proper records relating to the allegation. This promotes and protects the safety and welfare of both young people and staff.

The three recommendations made at the last inspection have been met. Monitoring of case records has improved. The manager is proactive in seeking meetings with professionals when a review of the care or placement plan is needed. The practice of holding life-space interviews with young people, and debriefings with staff, following a restraint or serious incident is now embedded in the home's routines.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/05/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
31/01/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
09/08/2016	Full	Good
30/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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
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. (Regulation 12 (2) (b)) This specifically relates to more effective analysis and management of risks to young people's health, safety and welfare.	28/02/2018
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. (Regulation 36(1)(a)(14)) Specifically, the date and circumstances of all incidents when a child goes missing from the home must be recorded, including any information relating to the child's whereabouts during the period of absence.	28/02/2018
10: The health and well-being standard In order to meet the health and well-being standard, the registered person must ensure: that staff help each child to— (i) achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans; (ii) understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and	28/02/2018

understanding; and
(iv) understand and develop skills to promote the child's well-being. (Regulation 10 (2) (a) (i) (ii) (iv))

In particular, ensure that staff have a good understanding of each young person's mental health needs; administer medicines in accordance with prescriptions and medical advice; and are proactive in helping young people to give up smoking.

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.

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.

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: SC400355

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: Robert McEwan

Inspector

Sharon Lloyd, social care inspector

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