

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC400355
Inspector	Angela Whiteley
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 Marx Davitt
Registered manager	John Hindley
Date of last inspection	21/02/2014

Inspection date	30/10/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people live in a caring and supportive environment and confirm they feel safe at the home. Staff work tirelessly to help young people settle, understand and manage their behaviour differently and provide access to support services. Those in long-term placements make good progress from their starting point across all aspects of their welfare and development, particularly in terms of education, health, behaviour and self-esteem.

Young people comment positively on the quality of care they receive and their relationships with staff. A young person said, 'This is a brilliant home,' and another commented that, 'Staff help them a lot.'

A committed and well-trained staff team demonstrate detailed knowledge of each young person. Good communication exists between young people, staff and other professionals who have an interest in securing positive progress for young people. Individualised planning, target setting and chosen incentives are used effectively to encourage young people to achieve their potential.

Staff provide opportunities for young people to succeed and encourage them to make positive choices in preparation for their adult lives. They demonstrate a good understanding of safeguarding practices and are supported with robust policies and

procedures that ensure young people's safety and welfare are promoted.

Good leadership, management and monitoring of the home ensure that young people's individual needs are met. They are consulted about all aspects of their care and their views and wishes carry weight. However, not all young people have access to an independent advocate to assist them in getting their views heard, particularly when they wish to challenge the care plan.

The Registered Manager is effective in securing improvement in practice and has good monitoring and oversight of the standard of care. Nevertheless, areas for improvement are identified in respect of not promptly sending notifications of outcomes of child protection investigations to Ofsted. However, staff take appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of young people. Also, to ensure prompt maintenance and re-decoration of the home and that young people's bedrooms are kept clean and tidy and the ladybird influx is addressed to provide a more homely and comfortable living environment. The shortfalls have not impacted negatively on the welfare or safety of young people and do not undermine the high level of care provided.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home provides accommodation for up to three young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a private company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/02/2014	Interim	good progress
18/07/2013	Full	good
22/02/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
06/12/2012	Full	good

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
30 (2001)	notify without delay any events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5; with particular reference to notifying Ofsted of the outcome of any child protection enquiry involving a child accommodated at the home (Regulation 30 (1))	11/12/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is

well maintained and decorated. In particular, ensure young people's bedrooms are kept clean and tidy, damage to furniture, furnishings and walls is dealt with promptly and the ladybird influx is addressed (NMS 10.3)

- ensure children are assisted to obtain the support of an independent advocate to help them in providing their views, wishes and feelings to statutory reviews. (NMS 25.7)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people settle quickly and make good progress from their starting point. They benefit from the supportive and nurturing environment offered. They say they feel safe at the home and are well cared for and respected. They are supported to develop a healthy self-image through regular therapeutic support, behaviour management plans and individual care planning sessions. These sessions address behavioural issues and consider the impact of their early life experiences. They are positively encouraged to develop appropriate friendships outside the home. This range of measures helps to strengthen young people's confidence, emotional resilience and well-being.

Young people enjoy good health. They receive support and encouragement from staff to lead healthy lifestyles and participate in appropriate leisure activities, such as horse riding and biking. They enjoy the physical health benefits associated with regular exercise and are supported to engage in a positive way in activities in the local and wider community, such as participating in a charity walk. They are registered with primary health care providers and have access to additional support services, such as mental health services, sexual health and drug and alcohol advice. They learn the importance of personal hygiene and develop good personal care skills with the support of staff. A placing social worker comments, '(name) takes pride in her appearance and is more confident than prior to being placed at this home.'

Young people enjoy a well-balanced and healthy diet that they choose and plan with staff. They are encouraged to shop for food items and help prepare meals. Their routine and specialist health care needs are effectively addressed and health appointments are regularly attended. Young people do not use alcohol or take drugs and are not involved in offending behaviour. Risk-taking behaviours have significantly reduced as placements settle.

Young people have excellent school attendance and make good progress from their starting point. For some, a significant improvement in attendance and learning has provided an opportunity to return to mainstream secondary education, with support. The home has strong links with school and other education providers and communicates regularly to monitor progress and enable a consistent approach to young people's care.

Young people have a strong sense of identity, promoted by regular contact arrangements with family and friends, which is agreed with the placing authority. Staff support and facilitate contact and some is supervised to ensure it is safe. This enables young people to maintain and reinforce important relationships and reach an understanding about their past experiences. This contributes to a strong sense of well-being.

Young people make positive progress in developing independence skills in accordance with their age and ability. Individual planned work and placing authority pathway plans are prepared to help young people learn new skills. They take small steps to gain confidence in their own abilities and prepare well for the transition to adulthood.

Quality of care

good

Young people live in a nurturing family environment. They receive good quality care and support from a motivated and experienced staff team. They develop positive relationships with staff and relate well to each other. They say it is a 'brilliant' place to live and relatives confirm that most young people are very happy and settled in the home. Information about making a complaint is readily available to young people. They confirm they can approach any of the staff team if they have worries or concerns and know how to complain if they feel unhappy with any aspect of their care.

Young people who display challenging behaviours that may place them at risk of harm are supported and guided by staff to make positive choices in their lives. Staff provide young people with clear, consistent boundaries and are confident to challenge young people's negative behaviours. They work hard to help young people achieve their potential and are persistent when faced with setbacks. Staff make good use of their relationships with young people to effect positive change.

Individual care plans clearly set out young people's care. Staff are proactive in contacting the placing authority to review placement plans to ensure the changing needs of young people are promptly recognised. This has ensured the home remains settled and young people's placements are stable. A placing social worker commented positively about the quality of the homes plans. Young people are encouraged to participate in all aspects of care planning, which means they know what progress they are making.

Young people are widely consulted. This includes regular individual meetings, young people's meetings and frequent care planning sessions. Their views and wishes are acted upon wherever possible. As a result, changes are made for their benefit, such as new furnishings and play equipment for the garden and contributing ideas for activities at holiday times. Staff promote open and honest communication and address any issues promptly with young people to ensure they engage positively with each other within the home and in the community.

Staff are proactive and consistent in supporting young people's educational achievement and attendance. Incentives and rewards are used to good effect and young people regularly achieve full attendance. Staff are proactive in challenging any barriers that prevent young people making the most of their education. They keep in close contact with educational providers to ensure any issues are resolved quickly.

Young people are encouraged to enjoy a healthy lifestyle. They have good access to health support services and staff are in regular contact with the looked after nurse and other health care providers. They participate in a range of activities, such as, horse riding, gym sessions and biking. These measures help promote and safeguard the welfare of young people. Staff help young people develop independence skills, which will assist their transition to adult life.

Young people live in a large spacious house that is generally well-decorated and furnished. They are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms with posters, wall art and furnishings. However, there is some recent damage to the home and young people's bedrooms are not kept clean and tidy. There is a seasonal influx of ladybirds, which does not provide a comfortable and homely environment for young people to live in and does not promote their welfare. The home has its own transport, which allows young people to access local facilities and those further afield.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people say they feel safe, secure and well cared for at this home. Staff talk to them about keeping themselves safe, particularly when out in the community. Young people say they generally get along well together. The home has a strong culture that bullying and discriminatory behaviour is not tolerated. Where incidents do occur young people have confidence in the staff to deal with these quickly. They are addressed with individuals or in house meetings to ensure all young people feel safe. This approach is supported by strong policies and procedures. Staff balance the need for protection with enabling young people to take managed risks as part of their growth and development.

Staff understand safeguarding procedures and receive regular appropriate training. They are confident and competent in implementing the policies and procedures if they have any concerns, or allegations are made about young people's welfare. For example, they promptly support young people when they feel safe enough to disclose information relating to previous placements. They recognise the particular vulnerabilities relating to the needs of young people and take appropriate action to address them. The local authority designated officer confirms, 'the home offers good supportive care.'

Despite their efforts, some young people are sometimes reported as missing from home, which places them at risk of harm. Staff know the local area and community well and immediately go looking for young people and keep in regular telephone contact with them until they return home safely. They have good links with the local police and police community support officer and if incidents do occur, there are clear practices and procedures in place that staff understand. They request meetings where changes to care plans are required and contribute well to strategies that help

to achieve more positive outcomes for young people. The homes written records show a significant reduction in young people being reported as missing from home and where it does occur young people return home quickly. All such episodes are monitored, fully considered and reviewed to promote young people's safety and welfare.

Individualised risk assessments and behaviour management plans identify risks for young people, which help to protect them. Positive behaviour is promoted through applying clear and consistent boundaries. Regular individual care planning sessions, incentives and rewards are all used to good effect to help young people develop socially acceptable behaviour. As a result, risk-taking behaviour has significantly reduced for young people as they settle in their placement.

Staff are trained in the appropriate use of physical restraint but only use this as a last resort to ensure young people's safety. They prefer to use de-escalation techniques such as, humour and distraction. These are effective measures, as the homes records show a reduction in the use of physical intervention and sanctions as young people settle and learn appropriate boundaries.

Thorough recruitment and vetting procedures are in place and visitors to the home are checked and supervised as appropriate. This helps to prevent unsuitable people having access to vulnerable young people. Good practice around storage, handling, administration and disposal of medication also safeguards young people's welfare.

Young people enjoy a safe and secure environment as safety within the home is ensured by the routine checking of electrical, gas and fire equipment. Health and safety guidelines are followed and effective assessments are in place of any hazards in the home.

Leadership and management

good

The home benefits from strong leadership. It is effectively managed by a motivated and experienced Registered Manager who is suitably qualified. He has been the Registered Manager since January 2012 and has completed a relevant leadership and management qualification. He has an inclusive approach, working alongside the staff team on regular shifts. He has strong support from a competent staff team who understand the needs of the young people and the expectations for the smooth running of the home.

The home is sufficiently resourced in terms of staffing and finance and meets the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose. There are sufficient numbers of staff on duty to ensure that young people's individual needs are met and that they are safe. Any shortfalls in the rota are covered by the staff team or by staff from another home within the company, which ensures young people are cared for by staff that know them and can effectively respond to their needs. The staff team work

effectively with family members, professionals and other agencies, which provides a consistent approach to young people's care. A grandparent said, 'he would be happy to recommend the home to other families who needed this service, as they had done excellent work with (name).'

Staff confirm they are well supported by their colleagues and the Registered Manager. They receive annual appraisals and regular supervision, training and team meetings. This ensures they have frequent opportunities to develop and reflect on their practice to meet young people's needs. Training is strongly promoted, and in addition to mandatory training, staff are encouraged to access a wide range of courses. The providers approach ensures that staff are fully aware of current good practice.

Young people's records are of a good standard, are stored securely and present a good overall picture of their experiences at the home. Recording at this home is of a good standard. The provider prepares a comprehensive placement plan document for all young people in their care, which is agreed with the placing authority social worker. This gives a clear picture of young people's care needs. Young people are regularly engaged in discussions about their care and participate in their review meetings and influence the running of the home. Despite this, not all young people have access to an independent advocate to help them give their views at their review meetings, particularly when they are challenging the placing authority care plan.

The Registered Manager has effective monitoring and quality assurance systems in place, which ensure young people, enjoy good standards of care and protection. There is an effective system in place to notify appropriate agencies about significant events and investigations. However, not all outcomes of child protection investigations are promptly notified to Ofsted. The staff take appropriate action to safeguard young people and the Registered Manager is taking action to address this administrative shortfall. He understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home and continues to strive for improvements to the service. Other key documents are in place, including a realistic development plan that is reviewed regularly to help drive forward improvements. There were no requirements or recommendations made at the last inspection, which shows the providers commitment to improving the service.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.