

SC413078

Registered provider: Castle Homes Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately operated home offers accommodation for up to two young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 6 June 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 27 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- From their starting points, young people make very good progress in relation to their educational attendance, engagement and achievements.

- Placement stability is very good in this home, coupled with very positive matching of individual young people's complex needs.
- Young people receive care and support from a very dedicated and competent staff team and manager. Staff feel very well supported in their roles and take pride in the achievements made by young people.
- Young people get to see and spend time with family members, friends and other people who are significant to them. Staff fully support all agreed contact plans to a high level.
- Young people begin to learn the necessary skills for moving on to adult life. They gain confidence and feel supported to take age-appropriate risks.
- Young people feel safe and are kept safe from harm.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Some records considered during this inspection had not been regularly updated to describe all actions taken to support young people.
- One young person does not currently have a pathway plan in place and is approaching adulthood.
- Records relating to staff first aid training are not clear.
- Recruitment checks are robust, but additional information relating to staff driving checks are not consistently recorded.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
22/06/2016	Full	Good
02/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
22/07/2015	Full	Outstanding

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

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
Ensure that case records for each child are kept up to date. (Regulation 36(1)(b))	10/07/2017
Ensure that at all times, at least one person on duty at the home has a suitable first aid qualification. (Regulation 31(2)(a))	10/07/2017

Recommendations

- Ensure that staff actively seek to make the fullest contribution, working with other relevant persons, to the pathway planning process. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.28)
- Ensure that good employment practices are maintained in relation to checks of staff members' driving and car details. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This children's home has provided consistent and lengthy placements for two young people for some considerable time now. Since moving to live at this home, both young people have made very good progress in all areas of their lives. This is particularly apparent in both their engagement and achievements in education.

A placing social worker for one of the young people stated: 'Their progress in relation to education has been absolutely amazing. They have done better than we could have hoped. They are happy and engaging very well.' Additional tutorials and support are provided for the other young person in their school, with strong and clear partnership working evident between education and home staff. Communication is seen by professionals as a key strength of this home. Young people place a strong value on their education and have plans and aspirations for their futures. One young person has secured a college placement for later this year, and the other young person is achieving well.

Young people get to see family members, friends and others who are significant to

them. Staff fully support agreed contact plans. They transport young people to see family and friends and supervise visits with family, when needed. One placing social worker praised the staff team for its commitment in this area. The social worker stated that one young person would not have such high levels of contact with their family were it not for the commitment of the staff team in promoting it.

Young people receive good levels of support in relation to their health needs. They attend routine health appointments and have access to more specialist health services as necessary. Records seen reflect that young people feel well supported and know the importance of considering and meeting their health needs.

Another key strength of the home relates to how well staff plan and work with young people to consider and address specific needs. Very well organised and recorded key-work sessions reflect how staff make the link between incidents, agreed consequences for concerning behaviours and spending time with and encouraging young people to reflect on their actions or behaviours. Young people clearly respond very well to such support. Their increasing levels of maturity and confidence reflect the positive support and care they receive from the staff team.

Young people learn new skills and start to take more responsibility for meeting their own needs. They learn how to prepare meals, do their own laundry and use public transport unaided. Staff realise the need to prepare young people well in advance of them moving out of this home, in readiness for adult life. One young person has a detailed pathway plan in place, but the other young person does not have one in place. It is very important that staff and managers work closely and proactively with the placing authority to ensure that this key document is in place as soon as possible. This will assist staff and the young person to devise and implement the plans for the next stage of the young person's life.

Case records generally reflect the positive work and support provided to young people. Some records considered during this inspection were out of date. These included a local authority care plan for one young person, and records of visits by the local authority social worker. There is also a need for managers to ensure that clear actions and outcomes are recorded about contact made by family members and professionals. It is evident that work is being done to support young people and their family members, but records need to reflect such work consistently.

Young people clearly feel well supported and able to express their wishes, feelings and views in this home. There have been two complaints made by young people since the last full inspection. Managers have fully considered the concerns raised by young people and responded to them in a timely and detailed manner. Young people report feeling confident that any concerns or issues they may have will be addressed to their satisfaction by both staff and managers. Regular young people's meetings provide young people with a more formal opportunity to express their views and feelings. Managers respond to any issues or requests made by young people following each meeting.

Staff support young people to engage in local activities and to access local resources.

They also promote independence skills well, encouraging and enabling young people to spend time alone with friends locally. Young people develop a sense of belonging in the community, form peer relationships and feel very well integrated as a result.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Young people report feeling protected and supported by staff at all times. Staff consider any actual or potential concerns in relation to neglect, abuse, bullying and sexual exploitation, and respond promptly. There are good systems in place through key-working sessions to discuss issues with young people and provide support. Placing social workers speak very positively about the excellent communication between them and staff. Family members also feel both very involved and that staff support them, as well as the young person. Such close and positive partnership working leads to young people feeling safe and valued at all times.

Young people have formed very close and healthy relationships with staff and managers in this home. They can identify adults whom they trust. It was very evident during this inspection that both young people felt at ease with staff, and felt able to share their wishes, views and feelings. Staff act as very positive and strong advocates for young people at all times.

Risk assessments reflect the current and changing needs and issues for both young people. Key workers consider risk assessments on a regular basis, to ensure that they remain suitable. Young people work with staff to consider and address any actual or potential risky behaviours, leading to improvements over time.

There have been no missing-from-care incidents from this home for a considerable period of time. This reflects the high staffing levels, but also the fact that young people feel safe, trusted and secure living in this home. Records include detailed information and guidance, in the event that a young person were to go missing. Staff demonstrate a detailed awareness and understanding of the risk factors for both young people, and have received relevant training to further support their competences.

Staff support young people to take age-appropriate risks over time. These have included increased free time for one young person, to enable them to visit and spend time with friends in the local community. There are also plans in place for the other young person, in relation to increasing their independence skills when out in the community. Staff display a real commitment to ensuring that young people feel trusted and able to take some risks over time, in line with their plans and risk assessments. This demonstrates a staff team committed to ensuring that young people feel well prepared for their eventual move to adult life.

There has been no use of physical intervention in this home for a considerable period of time. Staff work with young people to consider their actions and behaviours, and to de-escalate any potentially risky situations. They understand the young people and their

triggers very well. They follow the plans and risk assessments, and use formal key-work sessions to help young people develop coping skills.

Recruitment and selection procedures for staff coming to work in this home are robust, and prevent unsuitable adults from having the opportunity to harm young people. Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. There have been no allegations made about staff for a considerable period of time. Staff present as confident and in feeling very well supported by the interim manager.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager for this home left in April 2017 to take up another position within the same company. The deputy manager is currently acting up as manager for the home, pending the recruitment of another permanent manager. He has been the deputy manager at this home for some considerable time and knows the staff and young people very well. He feels very well supported in his interim role by both the responsible individual and other registered managers within the organisation.

The interim manager has been able to continue with the good levels of management monitoring and oversight established by the previous registered manager. He demonstrates a detailed awareness and understanding of the services and support provided to young people. As an established manager, he has continued to support staff to a very good level since the departure of the registered manager. Staff spoken with during this inspection clearly felt very well supported by the interim manager, and felt that he has continued the positive work done by the previous manager.

The interim manager has a very positive relationship with both young people and is spoken of highly by placing social workers, family members and education providers. All report feeling that communication is a key strength of the staff and manager. This helps to consolidate the consistent care and support provided to young people. They feel central to the care they receive, with family members also feeling very involved and welcome.

The management and staff run a very welcoming home that is well maintained, both internally and externally. Young people's bedrooms reflect their personal likes and interests. The home has a pet hamster, with young people being encouraged to take responsibility for it, with staff support. Any damage caused within the home is quickly reported and repaired. Young people clearly take pride in their home and in working with staff to maintain it to such a good standard.

Staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisals. Monitoring systems enable the manager to ensure that all staff receive the professional support and supervision they require. The use of agency staff in this home has reduced, with the interim manager being keen to use the same agency staff whenever possible. Young people receive care and support from a committed permanent staff team. They benefit from consistency of care.

Two shortfalls were identified as a result of the last inspection. The manager has ensured that the statement of purpose has been updated to reflect changes within the management team, and has provided Ofsted with a copy. Staff now more diligently ensure that key-work sessions take place, following any relevant incidents. Records clearly describe the incident, any sanction agreed with the young person and evidence of work being done to consider their concerning behaviours.

The interim manager has recently delegated some responsibilities and lead roles to various staff members within the home. One such area relates to the recording and monitoring of training undertaken by staff. During this inspection, it was not clear which members of staff had completed their first aid training. The interim manager could not access full information because the lead member of staff was not present during the inspection. The inspector was assured that all relevant staff had a relevant first aid qualification, but there is a need to ensure that this is clearly recorded on each staff member's records, and certificates kept with the records.

There is a need for more consistent procedures to be implemented by the manager when checking staff members' driver details. Staff only use the company vehicle to transport young people. They use their own vehicles to travel to and from work, and also for other business reasons at times. Documentation seen during this inspection for permanent members of staff was not clear or consistent. This shortfall relates to the need to ensure that driving licences, car insurance and other documentation has been seen and recorded by the manager on a regular basis to reflect that it is in-date and relevant.

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.

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: SC413078

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Castle Homes Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 80 Hammersmith Road, LONDON W14 8UD

Responsible individual: Julie Wallhead

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector(s)

Tracy Murty, social care inspector

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