

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	22 June 2016
Unique reference number	SC413078
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Castle Homes Care Limited
Registered provider address	80 Hammersmith Road, London W14 8UD

Responsible individual	Julie Wallhead
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Tracy Murty

Inspection date	22 June 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved 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

SC413078

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people make good progress from their starting points in all areas of their lives. They form positive and secure attachments with the staff team and develop in confidence. They present as being happy and feel that they have a say in how the home is run on many levels.
- Staff work hard to ensure that the health needs of all young people are known and holistically well met. Staff work closely and positively with a wide range of agencies and professionals to ensure that specialist and routine healthcare needs are met. Agencies spoken with during this inspection praised staff and managers for how well they meet young people's healthcare needs.
- Young people benefit from consistent care in this home. Staff retention is positive and staff see their role as supporting the young people to do the very best that they can in their lives. Young people respond very well to the support that they receive and feel valued. High staffing ratios provide young people with the support that they need to develop and ensure their safety at all times.
- Incidents of young people going missing from care are minimal, reflecting the high levels of support and supervision provided to them. Staff demonstrate a detailed awareness and understanding of procedures to be followed and have formed very close working relationships with the local police. Risk assessments set out the known and potential risks and triggers for young people's concerning behaviours. Communication between staff members is positive and includes very detailed recording and discussions each day about each young person in hand-over meetings.
- Staff feel very well supported by managers. They receive regular supervision and comprehensive training and development opportunities. This leads to a staff team that is very competent, skilled and motivated to provide high-quality care and support to young people.
- Planning for new admissions and support to those young people who have moved to independence is excellent. The most recent admission to the home was extremely well planned, leading to a smooth transition for the young person involved and very positive matching of the needs of the other young person in placement.
- Some shortfalls have been identified as a result of this inspection. These relate to contact plans, advocacy provision, escalation of concerns about a placing authority, monitoring devices and transition planning. There has been no adverse impact on young people as a result of these shortfalls.

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.

Requirement	Due date
Ensure that if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (c))	1 August 2016
Ensure that devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children are only used if the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(d))	1 August 2016
7. The children's views, wishes and feelings standard In order to meet the children's wishes, views and feelings standard, the registered person should— (2)(b) ensure that each child— (iii) is given appropriate advocacy support.	1 August 2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the registered provider works with the placing authority to ensure that each child's transition is planned and help each child to prepare for leaving both practically and emotionally ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 57, paragraph 11.9).
- Ensure that arrangements for contact and any contact details (telephone numbers and so on) must be included in the placement plan agreed between the registered person and the child's placing authority and updated regularly ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.5).

Full report

Information about this children's home

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
2 February 2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
22 July 2015	Full	Outstanding
9 March 2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10 December 2014	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people present as being very happy and settled in this home. They form very positive relationships with the staff team and feel able to discuss any issues or concerns that they may have with the staff. There have been no reported complaints since the last inspection, as one young person said: 'I can talk with my key worker or any of the staff or managers about any worries I have. I know that they will sort them out for me.' A family member of one young person commented: 'He presents as being happy and settled in the home and I have no worries about him at all. The staff listen to him and keep him safe.' Young people take part in a range of fun and stimulating social activities, which increases their confidence and self-esteem. They engage in activities in the local area, such as attending the gym and using the local library. This promotes a real sense of inclusion for young people and ensures that they feel well integrated into the local community. A summer holiday has been planned for this year, with young people deciding where they want to go. This reflects the commitment of the staff team and managers to ensuring that young people feel central to the care that they receive at all times. The planning for new admissions to this home is very good. Managers and staff fully consider the needs of currently placed young people and potential new admissions prior to agreeing new placements. The needs of new young people are carefully considered, with visits to previous placements and opportunities for a young person to visit the home and have overnight stays prior to moving in. In a relatively short period of time, it is evident that such careful matching processes have led to secure and stable placements being made. Contact between young people and their families is promoted very well. Staff and managers have worked hard to rebuild relationships and promote contact to a high level for one young person. Family members feel welcome to visit the home and have regular phone contact with staff. This provides family members with updates as to the progress that young people make and enables them to feel very included in the care provided. For one young person, there is a need for the manager to challenge the placing authority to provide a clear contact plan in relation to sibling contact arrangements. Changes of local authority social workers for this young person have resulted in unacceptable delays in clarifying and resolving sibling contact. This would further promote the value of contact for young people. Young people have their health needs well met. They are all registered with appropriate health agencies and are encouraged and supported to attend all appointments. Specialist healthcare services provide young people with the additional support that they need. Regular consultation takes place with the child	

and adolescent mental health services. This includes detailed medication reviews and consideration of more complex physical or emotional health needs. As one placing social worker commented: 'The staff know the young person inside and out. They are my point of reference, as they know the young person better than I do. They fully support all appointments and treatment.'

Young people have a real voice in how the home runs and operates. They take part in regular young people's meetings and their views are fully considered by staff and managers. One young person leads meetings on health and safety matters in the home. They meet with staff and report any concerns or issues that they identify around the home. This role is in addition to the regular health and safety checks undertaken by staff and managers. This demonstrates the commitment of the staff team to ensuring that young people have a real say in how the home is run. It also increases the confidence and sense of self-worth of young people, who may not have had such opportunities before.

There has been one planned discharge since the last inspection. This was very successful, as the young person returned to live with family members. The transition back home was undertaken in a very sensitive manner, with increased amounts of time being spent with family members prior to the agreed discharge date. Staff fully supported the planned return home for the young person, with the outcome being very positive. There have been no emergency admissions to the home since the last inspection and planning for new admissions has been very robust and considered.

Young people benefit from clear and consistent care and respond well to the firm boundaries in place. They receive praise and recognition for their achievements daily and grow in confidence as a result. Pathway plans are not currently in place for the young people. Staff work to increase the skills and ability of young people to take age-appropriate risks, but this would be enhanced by having clear plans in place from the placing authority. There is a need for the manager to more robustly challenge placing authorities and escalate her concerns when they fail to provide such crucial documentation in a timely manner. For those young people who have limited contact and support from family members, they would benefit from having access to an independent advocate. When placing authorities have failed to ensure that this is put in place there is a need for managers to escalate their concerns to senior managers within the placing authority.

Staff and managers work closely with placing authorities and other agencies to promote the educational engagement of young people. Educational provision is in place for every young person and their attendance is very good. Due to changes in social workers for one young person, plans for post-16 provision have not progressed sufficiently. Managers have made attempts to challenge the placing authority, but there is a need for this to be escalated in order that clear and defined plans, and funding arrangements, are in place before the next term. There has also been a delay by one placing authority in relation to the education and healthcare plan for one young person not being produced in a timely manner. More robust challenge is required by the manager to ensure that this is in place.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people report feeling safe living in this home and that staff really care about them. The staff team demonstrates a detailed and thorough understanding of the complex needs of each young person and how they can meet those needs. The staff team is particularly diligent in relation to considering risks and forming very detailed and comprehensive risk assessments. Regular reviews of such assessments enable staff to understand the changing needs of each young person and how staff should respond to any known or potential concerns. High staffing levels provide young people with the support and supervision that they need to ensure their safety, both within and outside of the home. There has only been one reported incident of a young person going missing from care since the last inspection. This incident did not take place within the home and was within the education setting. Staff from the home worked well with the school to ensure the safe return of the young person and followed all relevant policies and protocols. Multi-agency working is positive in such situations and managers understand the joint missing from care protocols and their role. Key work sessions with young people enable them to reflect on their actions and concerning behaviours, in order to reduce future risks. Staff and managers also invite the local police community support officer to visit young people following any concerning incidents. This enables young people to further learn about the consequences of any risky behaviours. Concerning behaviours reduce over time for young people due to the detailed and comprehensive behaviour management plans in place and staff responses. Staff spoken with during this inspection displayed a commendable understanding of the triggers for young people in relation to risky behaviours. Regular staff meetings, daily hand-over meetings and the recording of all incidents enable staff to provide consistent and comprehensive care to young people. There has only been one use of restraint since the last inspection. This reflects the ability of the staff team to de-escalate situations with young people and supports them to develop coping mechanisms for any concerning behaviours. A member of staff has a lead role in relation to bullying within the home. Young people receive information on this at their meetings and engage in discussions about the various forms of bullying. There have been no reported incidents of bullying, with very clear systems in place to consider and respond to any complaints of bullying that young people may make. Internet access and usage is closely monitored by staff to ensure the safety of young people. Staff and managers monitor and oversee the use of social media sites on young people's mobile phones and make regular checks to ensure that there are no concerns. Young people respond well to such supportive and protective practices by staff. Bedroom door alarms are used within the home to monitor young people during	

the night. Consent has been sought from placing authorities for such usage and is clearly recorded on young people's records. There is a need for regular review and update of risk assessments in relation to the use of door alarms to ensure that the use of such monitoring systems promotes the privacy of young people as much as possible and is only used when necessary.

The recruitment and selection of staff are robust and prevent unsuitable adults from working with vulnerable young people. Managers and staff display a clear understanding of their roles and any action needing to be taken in the event of an allegation being made against any member of staff. They report confidence in being supported by managers and in the role of the police and designated officer.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The home has recently appointed a new manager. She has the skills, knowledge and experience necessary to perform the role and has just been interviewed by the regulator for the position of registered manager. The transition process between the previous registered manager and the new manager has been well planned and smooth. All staff report confidence in the new manager and in the support that they receive to perform their roles. Staff retention is good in this home and there are no current vacancies. Staff receive regular and good-quality supervision and training opportunities. A wide range of training and development opportunities are provided, which further enhance the staff team's skills and competence. Staff can also identify additional training courses and report feeling confident that managers will try and source these for them. Managers monitor the training undertaken by all staff to ensure that refresher courses are attended in a timely manner. There is also a very detailed and comprehensive induction programme in place for new staff. This enables them to develop in confidence and skill, with the full support of more experienced staff and managers. Both staff and managers place the young people at the centre of their practice. Staff and managers consult with young people and seek their views on all aspects of how the home is run. This includes menu and activity planning and plans to develop the home and gardens. The manager ensures that any comments or requests from young people receive prompt attention and responses. Therefore, young people feel valued and able to contribute their wishes and feelings openly and with confidence. All agencies contacted during this inspection praised managers for their excellent communication skills and understanding of the needs of young people living in the home. Records reflect the commitment of the staff team and managers to ensuring that the needs of young people are holistically met. Regular audits of records and files are undertaken by senior residential care workers, who also act as mentors for	

other staff. Shift patterns for staff include sleep-in duties over a two-day period, which provide consistency of care for young people. This enables staff and young people to plan for activities and key work sessions together.

The home's statement of purpose is clear, detailed and understood by placing authorities. Young people receive a welcome pack on admission to the home, which clearly sets out the services and support that they will receive. It also includes information on how to make a complaint. Other useful information is provided for young people on a noticeboard in the home, which they value. The home is decorated and furnished to a high standard and looks and feels like a family home. Young people have been able to personalise their bedrooms and take pride in them.

Managers regularly monitor and review the progress made by young people and have good systems in place to record such monitoring. They strive to ensure that young people have the best possible chances and improved outcomes. Records reflect their attempts to chase local authorities for missing information, but more consistent approaches are required to ensure that agreed actions by placing authorities take place in a timely manner. More robust escalation processes are required in order to ensure that local authorities complete agreed actions from looked after review meetings.

A detailed location risk assessment is in place, and is regularly reviewed and updated by the manager. This includes consultation with a range of agencies and professionals. The home also has a clear and detailed development plan in place, which includes contributions from young people and staff. This further reflects the inclusive practice and ethos of the manager. No shortfalls were identified as a result of the last inspection of this home. Shortfalls identified at this inspection primarily relate to the performance of the placing authority of one young person and the need for managers to escalate their concerns in order to ensure that young people's needs are met. There has been no adverse impact on young people as a result of the shortfalls identified during this inspection.

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 '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 looked after children 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 that 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 who 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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