

# SC471581

Registered provider: Albrighton Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for two young people. The home provides care and accommodation for young people who have learning disabilities. The home is privately owned.

**Inspection dates:** 16 to 17 October 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 **requires improvement to be good**

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

**Date of last inspection:** 27 March 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:

- Young people receive individualised care from a nurturing staff team.
- Staff understand young people's individual needs.
- Staff work hard to understand young people's preferred methods of communication.
- Young people grow in confidence and ability.
- Young people's well-being improves through having a healthier diet and regular exercise.
- Staff seek young people's views regarding meal choices and activities.
- Daily communication between the staff and school supports young people to make good progress.
- Young people enjoy a wide range of hobbies and leisure activities that benefit them physically and emotionally and broaden their experiences.
- Staff keep in regular contact with young people's parents.
- Staff are positive about their work, and are supported through regular supervision.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Managers do not always ensure that maintenance work is completed in a timely way.
- Managers have not ensured that the statement of purpose clearly identifies the model of care operated by the home.
- The home's medication policy lacks detail about the arrangements for the safe storage of medication and staff training.
- Direct work with young people is not always reflected in their case records.
- Managers have not ensured that employment histories are verified prior to staff commencing employment.
- Young people do not have access to an independent advocate.
- Managers have not discussed the suitability of night-time security arrangements with social workers and parents.
- The manager's capacity to develop the home has been limited because he has

been covering gaps in the staffing of shifts.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 27/03/2017      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 25/07/2016      | Full            | Good                    |
| 01/03/2016      | Interim         | Not judged              |
| 14/12/2015      | Interim         | Not judged              |

## 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   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| The protection of children standard is that the registered person must ensure that the premises used for the purpose of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12(2)(d)) | 04/12/2017 |
| The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ('the statement of purpose') which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. (Regulation 16(1))                                                                                        | 04/12/2017 |
| The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines in the home. (Regulation 23(1))                                                                                                    | 04/12/2017 |

### Recommendations

- Ensure that all children have access to appropriate advocacy support, and where possible this should be provided by a person that the child chooses. Looked after children are entitled to an independent advocate to advise them and ensure that they have the support needed to express their views, wishes and feelings about their care and their lives. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.16)
- Ensure the locking of external doors, or doors to hazardous materials may be acceptable as a security precaution if applied within the normal routine of the home ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.63). This is with specific reference to discussing the sufficiency of night-time security arrangements with social workers and parents.
- Those with a leadership/and or management role should be visible and accessible to staff and able to deliver their leadership and/or management responsibilities. Any registered manager employed in the home should have sufficient capacity to ensure that the Quality Standards are met for each child in the home. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including quality standards', page 52, paragraph

10.7)

- Ensure that the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- Case records must be kept up to date, signed, and dated by the author of each entry. Children's case records must be kept for 75 years from the date of birth of the child, or if the child dies before the age of 18, for 15 years from the date of his or her death. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people move into the home in a planned way. For example, one young person who recently moved into the home started by initially visiting. This gave him the opportunity to form relationships with other young people and staff. A social worker told the inspector,

They were very firm in terms of making sure there was a good transition because of the other young person living there. Although I would have liked it to be quicker, it has worked well, helping him settle in. He is a lot more stable than I expected.

Young people attend school full time. Daily routines support them to maintain good attendance. Daily communication with school helps to ensure that issues are resolved early. A teacher told the inspector,

Communication is really good. We see the staff daily as they drop and collect the young person from school. We have a home-school diary, which is used every day that is helpful. Issues are acted upon quickly.

Staff pay great attention to supporting young people to express their views in their preferred style. Communication aids such as Social Stories, the Picture Exchange Communication System and Widgit are commonplace in everyday routines. Staff are also alert to the messages that young people communicate through their behaviour. For example, a member of staff told the inspector, 'We are aware of his body language, vocalisations and tics. You can tell by his movements whether the behaviour signals agitation or happiness.' With the encouragement of staff, one young person's vocabulary has increased and he is now able to use a variety of words correctly in a sentence. The focus on communication ensures that the young people are understood and that they have the encouragement and ability to make choices and influence their daily care.

Young people maintain good physical health and attend routine appointments with GPs,

dentists and opticians. For one young person, the staff have been instrumental in following up the progress of the assessments that are needed in order to access therapeutic support. A social worker told the inspector, 'They have been fantastic in chasing things up. They have really advocated in his best interests. They will challenge everyone.'

Young people are encouraged to lead active lifestyles and to enjoy varied and balanced diets, which they routinely help to plan. As a result, young people have seen improvements in their health. Young people have been away on holiday and day trips, and benefit from involvement in a range of activities both within and outside of the home. For example, young people often take part in sensory activities, walking, going to a disco, bowling and playing football.

Staff are creative in helping young people to become more independent. Praise from staff and being awarded a collectable sticker is helping one young person to develop his toileting skills and to brush his teeth regularly. Developing an incentive programme, including choosing the reward, is encouraging the other young person to learn a variety of skills. For example, making his bed, completing all of his personal care tasks, Hoovering, washing up and making his own breakfast. Attention to individualised support helps young people to make steady progress in increasing their independence skills.

Staff build good relationships with parents. Parents are welcomed to the home and contact is supported. The home environment is warm and relaxed. However, some aspects of the physical condition of the home require improvement. For example, repairs are needed to the bannister, a door in the kitchen does not shut properly and the seating area of a sofa and a dining-room chair have sunk. Cracks in the ceiling in the lounge have not been investigated. A lack of prompt identification and resolution of maintenance issues detracts from young people having a homely environment in which to live.

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

Young people build secure relationships with staff at their own pace, and are relaxed and comfortable around their carers. High supervision levels mean that young people benefit from being able to spend quality time with staff who support and guide them to stay safe. Young people do not go missing. Bespoke plans and risk assessments ensure that staff are aware of the risks to young people. Staff understand how to keep young people safe through training, discussion in staff meetings and being familiar with procedures and guidance on safeguarding. One young person told the inspector, 'Yeah, I feel safe.'

Staff receive training in behaviour management and de-escalation techniques. Clear daily routines and incentive schemes, developed with young people, give them maximum control over their lives and encourage positive behaviour. This means there has been no need for physical intervention or the use of consequences. There are no known risks in relation to radicalisation or child sexual exploitation. However, staff receive regular training that helps them to understand the risks that young people can face.

The young people are happy in each other's company and they spend time together. Young people are supported to express their views through general interaction, regular young people's meetings and key-working sessions. More recently, an electronic survey has been used. This has helped a young person to express his views about his independence plan. However, young people do not have access to an advocate to help them independently express their views.

Some direct work undertaken with young people is not reflected in their records. This means that important information about the young person's journey and progress is not available to them or others.

Young people enjoy using their electronic tablets to access the internet for learning and leisure. They are safeguarded through the use of parental controls that help to reduce the risk of young people accessing unsuitable content.

Routine health and safety checks ensure that the home environment is safe, secure and free of hazards.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

The manager was registered in June 2017, having previously been the care coordinator for the home. He is suitably qualified and experienced for the role, and understands young people's needs. Most staff hold the level 3 diploma in residential childcare. All of the remaining staff are working towards their awards.

Since the last inspection, there have been some changes to staffing, with six staff leaving and six joining. Two members of staff have recently joined the team, and are on probation. One member of staff spoke positively about their induction, telling the inspector, 'The induction is good and builds your confidence to work with young people.'

Staffing changes, coupled with a new young person joining the home, have resulted in some staffing difficulties. The registered manager has focused on ensuring that young people know the staff who are working with them, and that consistency is maintained. Staff working additional hours have covered gaps in the rota. In recent weeks, the registered manager has been working a considerable number of hours on shift, which has affected his capacity to oversee all aspects of the management and development of the home. This has contributed to some shortfalls in the delivery of the home's development plan and communication with others. For example, work to bring together the young people's plans to make them more accessible has stalled and consultation with placing authorities on night-time security arrangements has not happened.

The registered manager is child focused and enthusiastic, and has a clear vision for the development of the home. He values his staff and understands the importance of good staff care in making sure that young people are well cared for and are safe. Staff meetings happen regularly and a clinical psychologist is used to help support team

development and reflection. Staff report that morale is good, and that they feel supported through regular, good-quality supervision. One member of staff told the inspector, 'I like coming to work. The boys are fun to be around. It's nice, staff all get on.' Another member of staff said, 'I have had good support from the manager, both formally and informally.' However, managers have not ensured that employment histories are verified prior to staff commencing employment. This compromises the organisation's safe recruitment procedure because the suitability of staff to work with vulnerable young people is not verified.

Managers have established good relationships with a variety of partner agencies that supports young people's safety and progress. A police officer told the inspector, 'I am welcome to pop in anytime when I'm out on patrol. The staff are friendly and fully cooperate with any requests from us. I do not have any concerns regarding safeguarding at the care home.'

Recently, the home has ceased using night staff and two staff now sleep in overnight. The young people do not routinely need personal care throughout the night, so the staffing arrangement is proportionate to their needs. However, the front door is easily unlockable and the door alarm only sounds once the door is open. This means that a young person could leave the premises without supervision during the night. This could compromise their safety.

The medication policy is unclear about who is permitted to administer medication. The policy for safe storage arrangements is also unclear. The lack of attention paid to ensuring that there is comprehensive guidance regarding the safe handling and storage of medication increases the likelihood of medication errors.

The registered manager has reviewed the statement of purpose. It has been updated to include the details, experience and qualifications of the team. However, it lacks sufficient clarity on the model of care and the nature of the services provided by the clinical psychologist. The lack of clarity in the statement of purpose impacts on the ability of the team and others to understand the care offered to young people.

## **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:** SC471581

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Albrighton Care Limited

**Registered provider address:** Albrighton Care Ltd, Suite 4, Bermar House, Rumer Hill Business Estate, Rumer Hill Road, Cannock, Staffordshire WS11 0ET

**Responsible individual:** Darren Smallman

**Registered manager:** James Stanley

## Inspector

Alison Cooper: social care inspector

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