

SC486114

Registered provider: Life Change Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately run children's home that provides care and accommodation for up four girls who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Young people also have access to regular specialist support, which is delivered by a range of qualified therapists.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 September 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: 12 January 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None.

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people make good, sometimes significant, progress because of the high standards of therapeutic and nurturing care and support they receive. They recognise the progress they make, and how staff have contributed to this, and are aspirational about their future plans.
- Relationships are strong and provide young people with a sense of stability, safety and belonging. They confirm that they are happy and settled in what they describe as their home.
- There is a good focus on helping young people to develop the necessary skills and opportunities to effectively plan for adult life.
- Staff promote the importance of education, training and work, and have supported young people to successfully work towards their individual goals and targets.
- Young people are safe. Staff understand their behaviours, risks and vulnerabilities and are effective in helping young people manage and reduce these.
- Feedback from third-party stakeholders is consistently positive and recognises the positive impact this home is having on each young person.
- The home is successfully run by a registered manager who demonstrates a passionate commitment to the young people in her care.
- The registered manager is realistic about what she has achieved so far and recognises what needs to be done in order to make the home outstanding. The recent recruitment of an experienced deputy manager will only serve to strengthen the already good leadership and management of the home.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The registered manager must ensure that all staff, in particular new staff, receive practice-related supervision in accordance with the timescales set out in the home's supervision policy.
- The registered manager must ensure that Ofsted is notified following the occurrence of any serious event, as outlined in regulation 40.
- The registered manager should ensure that pathway planning starts at the point the young person becomes 'eligible'.
- The registered manager should ensure that each young person's risk

assessment accurately reflects their levels of risk and vulnerability.

- The registered manager should ensure that each young person's individual crisis management plan contains specific guidance for staff on the use of restraint.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
23/05/2016	Full	Good
02/11/2015	Full	Good

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 registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33(4)(b))	26/10/2017
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40(4)(b))	26/10/2017

Recommendations

- As the home will have a day-to-day understanding of young people's capabilities and needs, children's homes staff will have a valuable contribution to make to the pathway planning process. Specifically, they should ensure that the placing authority starts the pathway assessment and planning process at the point the young person becomes an 'eligible' child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.28)
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Specifically, they should ensure that each young person's risk assessment provides an accurate reflection of their level of risk and that individual crisis management plans provide clear direction for staff in relation to physical restraint. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The young people who live in this home are settled and see the house as their home. They share strong reciprocal relationships with staff who they trust, and who have helped them to overcome the barriers and challenges they face in their lives. Young people are making positive choices about their future, and are making good, sometimes significant, progress in relation to their individual starting points and the amount of time they have been living in the placement. This is because of the consistent support they

receive from staff who have an excellent understanding of their needs, behaviours, risks and vulnerabilities. This level of support is recognised and appreciated by the young people, who are consistently positive about living in this home. One young person said, 'I feel well supported and staff go above and beyond.' She went on to say, 'Where I am now is down to what staff do. I am settled and a different person. It is a fantastic place and I am really lucky to be here.'

Staff are proactive in their efforts to promote and support education. This includes working closely with the placing authority of one young person to ensure that a suitable education placement is sourced for her. As an interim measure, the staff have put into place an individualised timetable, which includes one-to-one tuition with a private tutor. This has helped the young person re-engage in education after a significant period of non-attendance. Her social worker said, 'Overall I am impressed with the home. My young person has been placed since just before the summer holidays and she has come on leaps and bounds since then. The home are providing a solid foundation and are addressing all aspects of her day-to-day life, including promoting her education.'

Those young people who are established in the placement consistently attend either mainstream school or college placements. They are aspirational and are willing to work hard to achieve the qualifications they need for their chosen career paths. For example, two young people spoke about completing the National Citizen Service scheme, recognising its importance as preparation for going to university and training to be social workers.

Staff work closely with therapists to provide a therapeutic and nurturing approach to caring for young people. This approach is integrated well into care planning and is delivered in a child-focused and needs-sensitive manner. Clinical reviews are regularly completed to ensure that therapists and staff are working collaboratively. This ensures that each young person is supported in accordance with their agreed plan of care. The effectiveness of this approach is evident in how much young people mature, find stability and grow in self-confidence. One social worker said, 'I like to go to the home because it is a really relaxed environment. It feels like a home.' She went on to say, 'I know [Name] is in safe hands and would recommend placing any young person at this home. It is clearly therapeutic.'

Each young person is encouraged to pursue their individual hobbies and interests. Staff are quick to source activities and clubs and they provide the necessary funding and support to ensure that young people can access these. These include opportunities to simply have fun or activities that have a purpose, such as keeping fit or spending time in the community developing friendships with peers who enjoy similar interests and pastimes. Young people are very positive about the range of things they can do, and excitedly told the inspector about all the new and exciting things that they had done on a recent holiday. For example, braving zip wires and trampolining in a cave. Also, one young person proudly spoke about her part-time job and voluntary work, which is a positive testament to how much she has progressed since being at this home.

The manager and staff are aware of how important family contact is for each young

person. They work closely with social workers and family members to ensure that contact is safe, well-planned and a positive experience for all involved. They provide young people with the necessary support, for example supervising tricky contact sessions or simply providing resources such as transport to and from contact. This ensures that young people can maintain well-supported links with those people who are important to them.

Young people confirm that they are listened to and feel that their views are important to the manager and staff. They said that they feel valued and respected and fully involved in making decisions about the day-to-day operation of the home and their care. They know how to make a formal complaint and confirm that they are satisfied with the action taken by the manager on the rare occasions that they have had reason to do this.

Staff support young people in helping them prepare for their transition to adult life. They encourage young people to undertake practical tasks such as cooking and budgeting, and provide the necessary support to enable them to become more independent. Part of the house can be used as a semi-independent flat. This is currently being used to help one young person prepare to leave the home in the forthcoming months. The young person said, 'I am ready to leave. It is hard sometimes coming home from college and having to cook my tea, but I realise that this is real life. Staff help me when I need it and I know that this won't stop when I leave.'

Pathway assessments have been undertaken in relation to both young people who meet the criteria for 'eligible'. However, neither was completed at the point of the young person becoming 'eligible', with one document only being received during the inspection. Consequently, there is no written pathway plan for staff to work towards. The impact of this is minor because the manager is fully involved in discussions with placing authorities and is clearly focused on ensuring that the right support is in place for when young people leave. For example, he is looking at how the home can continue to support one young person in the community, and is considering the feasibility of purchasing a property to accommodate the other.

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

Young people confirm that they feel safe. They were each able to identify a number of staff who they could talk to if they had any worries or concerns. None of the young people raised concerns about feeling bullied and they were confident that staff deal with interactional difficulties when they arise. One young person said, 'We have fall-outs and sometimes staff see this as bullying. I see it as one of the things of living together and it isn't bad.'

Young people benefit from the skills that staff employ to help them manage their behaviours, risks and vulnerabilities. This is because staff have a clear understanding of each young person's needs and work effectively, with the support of the therapeutic team, to manage and reduce risk-taking behaviour. Staff help young people to understand their own behaviour, and provide the necessary guidance and support to

help them make positive choices about keeping themselves safe. As a result, behaviours such as self-harm, going missing and substance misuse reduce quickly to the point that incidents of these types of risk-taking behaviour become extremely rare or disappear completely. One social worker said, 'Before coming to this home [Name] was a really high-risk young person. From the start of her placement, everything has been considered and put into place. They risk assess everything to make sure she is safe, but make sure she can have the same experiences as her friends.'

Staff support young people to understand expectations of their behaviour within the home and in the community. They act as positive role models and consistently apply parent-like expectations that encourage positive behaviour. When young people do push boundaries, the initial response of staff is to work through the issues without immediately resorting to sanctions. They make good use of the relationships that they have with young people, and are skilled at using these when young people are struggling to cope emotionally. This has helped young people learn how to self-regulate their behaviour without needing to be restrained by staff. Indeed, it is to the staff's credit that there have been no incidents of physical restraint since the home opened in 2015.

Young people have individual risk assessments and crisis management plans in place. These are regularly reviewed and, for the most part, provide an accurate reflection of the risks each young person poses to themselves or others, and strategies for managing and reducing these. However, some assessed areas do not provide an accurate reflection of individual risk levels. For example, one young person was assessed as being at significant risk when on activities, which is an inaccurate assessment that is based on what could happen rather than any tangible evidence base. Also, the individual crisis management plans do not provide any guidance for staff on what techniques they should use if they are required to physically restrain a young person.

All staff complete basic training in safeguarding, and know what action to take if they have any concerns regarding the young people's welfare. The manager and staff give young people's safety a high priority, and have been proactive in involving external agencies when safeguarding concerns have arisen. For example, they have notified the police when young people have been inappropriately contacted on social media. In such cases, staff have worked closely with these agencies while keeping young people and their social workers fully informed. However, the manager failed to notify Ofsted on this occasion.

Six staff have been recruited since the last inspection. In-house records are maintained by the manager. Scrutiny of these records suggested that one member of staff had been employed prior to their employer reference being gathered. However, information provided by the organisation's human resources department confirmed that a telephone reference had been sought prior to the staff member's start date. The manager immediately took action to improve in-house recruitment records to ensure that all future information is verified by her and matches that held at the head office.

Young people are protected by a range of health and safety procedures, risk

assessments and checks that ensure the environment is safe and secure. The home is maintained to a high standard, and is suitable for meeting the needs of each of the young people living there.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since June 2015, when the home first opened. She is qualified and has substantial experience of working with young people in a residential setting. Since the home opened, the manager has prioritised the development of a competent and stable staff team that shares the same child-centred aspirations as her. This plan is steadily coming to fruition, which is evidenced by the good, sometimes significant, progress this current group of young people are making.

The recent appointment of a competent deputy manager will further enhance the good management of this home. The new deputy has significant management experience, including a number of years as a registered manager. At the time of the inspection, they were in the process of analysing the operation of the home using the six-monthly review of quality of care as a framework. The manager and the deputy each demonstrate a good understanding of the home's strengths and successes, and have clear ideas about how to improve the operational aspects of the home, such as improving the processes for checking records and ensuring that staff supervision takes place. These, along with other areas for development, are to be incorporated into a development plan, which they intend to use to promote a realistic agenda of continuous improvement as they strive to be outstanding.

The manager is passionate about the young people and has worked hard to embed a child-centred and nurturing approach to caring for them. This ethos is shared by the increasingly stable staff team, the members of which have been carefully selected to provide therapeutic support. Staff confirm that they feel well supported by the manager, who regularly engages them in conversations about the work they are doing with the young people. However, scrutiny of records revealed that not all staff are receiving formal practice-based supervision in line with the organisation's policy. For example, two new staff have not had any formal supervision since starting work at the home in August 2015.

New staff are inducted well and are offered good support from the manager and the more experienced staff. They are provided with opportunities to complete mandatory training, much of which is delivered by the manager. Monthly supervision with the clinical team helps them to develop a sound understanding of the home's therapeutic model and consider how their practice impacts on the emotional well-being of the young people. The majority of staff are suitably qualified for their role and good arrangements are in place to support those who have not yet acquired the relevant qualification.

The registered manager works effectively with stakeholders to provide consistent care for young people. This includes good communication with parents, carers and social workers, as well as a range of healthcare, education and safeguarding professionals.

One social worker said, 'In respect of working together, I am regularly updated about [Name] progress. They ask appropriate questions and contact me when any issues occur.'

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: SC486114

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Life Change Care Limited

Registered provider address: Room 119, B1 Business Centre, Empire Way, Burnley, Lancashire BB12 6HA

Responsible individual: Julie Stirpe

Registered manager: Emma Bogle

Inspector

Paul Scott: social care inspector

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