

SC020151

Registered provider: Country Care Children's Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight children and young people who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 May 2021

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 10 December 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/12/2019	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
25/06/2019	Full	Good
07/11/2018	Full	Outstanding
22/11/2017	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people receive excellent care, therapy and education. Because the home operates its own school and employs its own therapists, there is a very consistent approach to young people's care planning. Any emerging needs are quickly identified and addressed.

All young people attend the on-site school. As a result, care and education plans are closely aligned and information-sharing is excellent. During the COVID-19 national lockdown, young people continued their education without interruption. This means that they made exceptional progress.

Young people are encouraged to develop their interests and skills. They enjoy learning about animal care. The home has access to a variety of animals, including horses, guinea pigs and a dog. Caring for the animals forms part of the home's therapeutic approach. This greatly improves young people's confidence and general well-being.

Relationships between young people and staff are excellent. Managers and staff are very child centred and go to great lengths to create a family style atmosphere in the home. This encourages a strong sense of belonging and strengthens relationships with peers and staff.

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

Young people become safer when living at this home. This is because the staff team has developed particularly strong and trusting bonds with young people. Staff work proactively to minimise risk and have an excellent understanding of young people's vulnerabilities. Staff use their relationships with young people to de-escalate behaviours quickly.

When risk cannot be safely managed, young people have access to accommodation that is separate from the main building. This provides young people with a higher staffing ratio and greater support during periods of crisis. One young person's health and well-being have improved significantly as a result of such a move. The way that the home supports young people through difficult periods is a key strength. This practice significantly reduces the risk of placement breakdown.

Young people's behaviour improves, and risk factors reduce. The therapeutic model of care is effective, which ensures that children receive consistent responses from staff. Staff hold children in very high regard. This is demonstrated in the way that they speak to and about young people, and in their written records about the young people.

Very good-quality safeguarding training ensures that staff are fully aware of their responsibilities if they are concerned about a young person in their care. Staff confidently manage all safeguarding incidents and share information appropriately with safeguarding agencies.

Managers ensure the safe recruitment of staff. Careful vetting ensures that only the right staff are employed. Applicants are provided with very good information about the care role so that they know what will be expected of them. When appointed, new staff receive a thorough induction, which includes opportunities to shadow experienced staff. Staff turnover is low as a result. This helps to ensure that young people receive very consistent care from a stable staff team.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager and deputy manager are good advocates for the young people. They have a very good understanding of the young people's complex health, education and social care needs. Managers have extremely high aspirations for all young people, regardless of the complexity of their care needs.

Managers ensure that staff have access to a wide variety of learning and development opportunities. Staff development is enhanced by the on-site therapist, who provides good-quality advice and guidance about all aspects of the home's therapeutic approach. Managers are recruiting a psychologist to further strengthen the support provided to children.

Staff morale is high. Managers have created a supportive working environment for staff. This helps staff to be resilient as they care for young people through unsettled periods. Staff are encouraged to develop their practice and take on increased responsibility as they become more experienced.

Management monitoring and oversight of the home are of good quality. However, a lack of attention to detail in the auditing of risk assessments, medication records, missing-from-care records and staff supervision records has meant that the manager has not always identified areas of potential improvement. Minor errors in practice have not always been identified.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should have systems in place so that all staff receive formal supervision of their practice, which is recorded. This supervision should allow them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that records are kept of the administration of all medication, which includes occasions when prescribed medication is refused. Where staff have questions or concerns about a child's medication, they should approach an expert such as a general medical practitioner, community pharmacist or looked after children's nurse. ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards', Page 35, paragraph 7.15)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: SC020151

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Country Care Children's Homes Limited

Registered provider address: The Meadows, Beech Lane, Dove Holes, Buxton, Derbyshire SK17 8DJ

Responsible individual: Rachel Dowle

Registered manager: Jason Sellars

Inspector

Simon Hunter, Social Care Inspector

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