

SC411798

Registered provider: Crossways Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This independent children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two children and young people, irrespective of gender, who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by a national provider of specialist services for children and adults with complex needs.

Inspection dates: 31 May to 2 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 requires improvement to be 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: 30 November 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: Declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

A compliance notice was issued regarding restraint practice. Compliance with this notice was monitored on 17 January 2017.

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The registered manager has made numerous improvements over the past six months.
- The monitoring of restraints and incidents by the manager is particularly effective, showing strong reflective practice.
- The two young people who have lived in the home since the last inspection have made good progress in most respects.
- The current single resident has thrived at his new school and is starting to make up for missed educational opportunities.
- The young people enjoy a wide range of activities which encourage involvement in the wider community.
- The young people have increased positive contact with their parents, brothers and sisters.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The premises risk assessment checklist format is inherently weak. It does not enable the manager to identify obvious risks.
- There are several environmental hazards in plain sight which have not previously been identified or actioned. Monitoring health and safety matters requires improvement to be good.
- Overgrown hedges make exiting from the drive on to the road unsafe.
- Although staff recruitment practice is generally safe, a small number of staff have been started on shift before all their checks are received.
- The decor has improved since the previous inspection, but there is still much work to be done to improve the quality of the accommodation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/11/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
09/06/2016	Full	Good
10/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
03/12/2015	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
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; and that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) and (2) (a)(i)(iii)(vi)(b)(d))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There is an effective premises risk assessment in place. ■ The uncovered pump and electrical connections in the parking area are covered securely. ■ Broken glass is removed from the premises immediately. ■ Action is taken to repair the potholes in the driveway. ■ Egress from the property on to the road is made safe. ■ The young people have access to sufficient power points or a suitable extension cable. 	31/07/2017
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.	31/07/2017

The registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children's home if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).

The requirements are that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1)(2)(3)(d) and Schedule 2)

In particular, ensure that all staff complete recruitment checks before they are started on shift in the home.

Recommendation

- Ensure that children's homes are nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, and that they are homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations. However, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. In particular, ensure that the stair carpet is replaced promptly. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', April 2015, page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There has been good progress since the interim inspection on 30 November 2016. That inspection found that the home had declined in effectiveness. Ofsted issued a compliance notice about restraint practice.

A monitoring visit on 17 January 2017 found that the home had made good progress. All elements of the compliance notice were met. Since then, the home has continued to improve.

The young person in the home enjoys productive, fun activities with the staff. During the inspection, he went go-karting and is becoming more adventurous. The young person also has some free time outside the home. Although he does go missing sometimes, he is learning to keep in touch with the staff when he is out and about.

The young person now trusts the staff enough to talk with them about his past and present situation. This is good progress, because he has only recently become confident enough to do this. Parents described how their son is now sometimes able to take himself away from a situation to cool off. This is also a major breakthrough.

At the interim inspection, neither of the young people were receiving education. They also were not in training or employment. One young person was over school-leaving age, but was finding it difficult to engage with any proposals or activities that the home had to offer. This young person has now moved on from the home.

In January, the present young person enrolled at the company's own school. He finds school rewarding and attends every day. As a result, the young person has made good educational progress. Although he has missed a lot of school, he is now on target to sit several GCSE exams. He has also made a friend at school, which is a great achievement.

The registered manager promotes consultation with the young people. He and his deputy manager insist on open and transparent communication. As a result, the relationships between the staff and the young person have improved. In turn, the quality of these relationships has contributed to his progress.

The young person now has an advocate to champion his views. The manager always consults the young people before making decisions which affect them. Young people also take part in regular meetings with their key workers.

The young person is not yet ready for formal independence work, but he helps the staff with the home's routines. During the inspection, he was helping to make some shortbread biscuits. He has also helped the maintenance man with work to the house.

The young person has positive contact arrangements so that he can see his family. The staff support contact visits very effectively. The young person recently asked to spend a long weekend with his family in the company's seaside caravan. This enabled him to enjoy time with his mother and her other children.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

The weaknesses in risk assessment and the quality of the environment found on this inspection require urgent attention. Although the young person has not been harmed as a result, there is the potential for this to happen.

There is no effective risk assessment for the premises. The company uses a tick-box format which does not ask the right questions. As a result, the format does not help the manager to identify obvious hazards.

The hazards identified during this inspection include an uncovered water pump with exposed switchgear and wiring, located in the parking area. The lid has rotted away, leaving the padlock and hasp.

There was a broken mirror behind the garden shed, awaiting removal. This contained dangerous shards of glass and was within easy reach of the young person. The registered manager removed it during the inspection and put it in his own car for disposal.

There is poor visibility for drivers pulling out of the driveway. This poses a risk because they have to join a busy road. The driveway is deeply pitted with potholes which could damage cars.

The independent visitor has asked several times for the home to buy a new stair carpet. The wooden stairs are potentially slippery and the glue on the treads is unsightly.

The young person needs an extension cable for his bedroom so that he can use his mobile phone from his bed. During the inspection, the phone cable was stretched across the hallway. This is a trip hazard. A requirement has been made about these health and safety matters.

The registered manager has recruited several new staff. These staff members are currently on their induction. Some new staff have not completed all their recruitment checks. In most cases, this has precluded them from working on shift. In one case, a staff member has worked on shift without all their recruitment checks in place. A requirement has been made.

The young man has recently gone missing several times, which is a cause for concern. The staff respond well when the young person goes missing. Their actions are in line with their missing from home risk assessment. The home has a positive relationship with the police. Staff work with them to help ensure the young person's safe return. Parents said that they are very concerned when their son goes missing and they worry about him until they know he is safe.

The young people receive return home interviews. Although these are not always within the 72 hour timeframe, they are helpful for the young person. The interviews have not identified any shortfall on the home's part that might be triggering this behaviour.

There are still major incidents, although these have reduced in frequency. A small number of incidents have been serious enough to justify physical intervention.

There have been three physical interventions since the monitoring visit. All have been of short duration and for relevant reasons. The registered manager monitors all incidents. This helps to ensure safe and effective practice. He conducts high-quality debriefs for the young person and staff. These are well recorded and provide an opportunity for effective learning.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home had a change of registered manager in November 2016. The new manager is qualified and experienced. He has now registered with Ofsted. The manager is very well supported by his deputy and they work well together as a team.

The registered manager monitors the home well and has made many improvements in a short time frame. The home also receives helpful monthly visits from an independent person. He writes good-quality reports which guide the home's development. The manager values this process and incorporates suggestions into practice.

The manager is aware of the young people's capacity for progress within the home. He is in frequent contact with the placing authority to keep placements under review. This helps to ensure that the home can continue to meet the young people's needs.

The home is now fully staffed. The team is diverse in age, gender and life experience. The registered manager has established regular team meetings. He has held a team day to allow time for building relationships and reflecting on practice. Staff supervision takes place regularly. Staff also receive annual appraisals to help guide their professional development. The home has access to a residential services consultant. Her insights have helped the team to change their practice when necessary.

Staff training is generally good. The staff receive an induction into the home's policies and practice. The team members can request extra courses if there is a specific need. As a result, the staff have received advanced training in attachment. This has helped them to respond more effectively to some young people's difficulties.

There were two recommendations made at the interim inspection. These were not followed up at the monitoring visit, because the purpose of that inspection was solely to monitor compliance with the notice.

In the first recommendation, the home was asked to improve the quality of the environment. The registered manager immediately removed the decorative but insensitive stencilled messages from the walls. The lounge has been redecorated, but

there is still considerable work to do. The home has been badly damaged over the past few months and it has proved difficult for the maintenance crew to keep up. The recommendation has been repeated.

The second recommendation concerned the statement of purpose. The manager has updated this recently. It has not yet been uploaded to the company's website or sent to Ofsted, but the manager is still working on this, so the recommendation has not been repeated.

The registered manager has very good professional relationships with other agencies. These relationships are strong enough to withstand challenge when necessary.

The young people's views have influenced the registered manager's decisions. For example, the young person asked for a younger staff member. The manager bore this in mind during a recent recruitment drive. The registered manager also consults the young person about decoration in the home. The young person has been asked to decorate one of the two lounges as a project.

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: SC411798

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Crossways Care Limited

Registered provider address: Crossways Care Limited, Unit B2, Elmbridge Court, Cheltenham Road East, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL3 1JZ

Responsible individual: Christine Cameron

Registered manager: James Corrado

Inspector(s)

Heather Chaplin: social care inspector

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