

# SC489970

Registered provider: Barford Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care and accommodation for up to four children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

**Inspection dates:** 17 to 18 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      good

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

**Date of last inspection:** 22 February 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:

- Children say that they feel safe in the home and know how to make a complaint.
- Staff understand the importance of contact and facilitate contact arrangements

for children with their friends and families.

- Children have positive relationships with staff who know and understand their individual needs.
- Staff support the children to develop their independence in line with their age and ability.
- Children enjoy a wide variety of interesting activities, both at the home and in the community.
- There is excellent communication between the home and placing authorities.
- Children benefit from receiving in-house therapeutic sessions and good quality key-worker sessions.

The children’s home’s areas for development:

- Staff have not completed the diploma level training within the required time scale.
- Not all staff have received supervision in line with the home’s own policy.
- Debriefs with staff are not routinely occurring after a measure of control is used.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
04/10/2016	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 an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification, the level 3 diploma for residential childcare (England) (‘the level 3 diploma’), or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the level 3 diploma, by the relevant date. (Regulation 32 (4)(5))	26/01/2018
The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b))	01/12/2017
The registered person must ensure within 48 hours of the use of any measure of control, that they, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so (‘the authorised person’) have spoken to the user about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3) (b)(I))	01/12/2017

### Inspection judgements

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

Children receive high-quality, consistent care and make good progress in this home. Managers and staff provide a stable and nurturing environment which the children respond well to. Children report that they are happy in their home and recognise that the experienced staff team has the skills to support their individual needs. A child said: ‘It is good living here. It is my home. I feel listened to and staff really do care. They are good role models and care for us like we are their own family.’ Another child said:

Staff have helped me recognise positive relationships and they keep me safe. Being here is the best thing for me. Most placements just give up on me but they won’t give up here as they genuinely care.

The stability provided supports children to maintain long-term placements. Two of the children have resided at the home for over two years. Both report that they are very content to remain until ready to move on to semi-independent living. Children have taken full advantage of the broad services and the support available to them. They are proud to acknowledge that the practical support provided has enhanced their self-care

abilities. Skills gained include cooking, budgeting, laundry and general housekeeping tasks. Learning vital future life skills helps children to achieve successful independent living.

Staff have high aspirations for the children. They encourage and support them with their individual educational packages. The majority of the children are enjoying school and have very good attendance. When children are reluctant to engage, staff are quick to respond in a proactive manner by working in partnership with educational professionals to improve outcomes. A headteacher said:

We are working very well together with a challenging child. I commend the manager as she has stayed firm and applied the boundaries, just as any good responsible parent would, to encourage and enable their child to grow.

Children benefit from receiving in-house therapeutic sessions. Children that previously found it difficult to engage now participate weekly with the provider's therapist. Alongside this, staff complete regular key-work sessions that cover a wide variety of topics. The sessions help and support children to look at behaviours and anything that may be worrying them. Staff are skilful at offering guidance and helping children to find alternative solutions. For example, a child who was very reluctant to attend the dentist had a session dedicated to oral hygiene. The outcome of the key-worker's intervention was the child understanding the importance of regular check-ups and attending their dental appointment.

Staff encourage and support children to engage in a range of stimulating opportunities and activities, both in the home and in the community. One of the children recently enjoyed a weekend trip to Blackpool. Another child talked enthusiastically about regularly attending the local trampoline park and looking forward to a trip to a local theme park. The girls particularly like holding pamper nights and all enjoy evenings out at the local cinema. These trips and associated activities ensure that children grow in confidence and increase their social skills.

Regularly held children's meetings, along with children's consultation forms, ensure that time is spent gaining the children's views on future activities and plans for the home. Children are encouraged to discuss any issues or problems they may have in these meetings. This ensures that staff are aware of any complaints or grumbles the children may have. Children say that they are fully aware of the complaint procedure. One child said: 'I know how to make a complaint. I have made one and I was listened to.' Including children in the process means that they feel valued and respected.

Staff understand the importance of contact for both the children and their families. They provide transport and/or facilitate supervised contact in line with the children's care plans. A social worker said: 'Contact arrangements work very well. Staff do whatever is asked of them to make it happen.'

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

Children say that they have good, positive relationships with staff and feel safe living in the home. One child said: 'I feel safe. I trust staff and tell them everything.' Another said:

Staff are supportive. They are good at what they do. I feel confident in making my feelings known and I have matured and grown up since coming to live here. I think part of this is just me growing up and the other is down to staff supporting me so well. They keep me safe and help. I'm more aware and recognise the risks I was putting myself in and I know how to keep myself safe now.

Staff complete detailed individual risk assessments for all children. These plans are comprehensive and are updated regularly. The manager ensures that staff are aware of any changes in children's behaviours by discussing this regularly in daily handovers and staff meetings. This means that staff are aware of any new guidance to follow to reduce risks further.

The children respond well to a consistent team that knows them well. A social worker said:

I'm very happy with the placement. She has developed positive relationships with staff. She has a history of placements breaking down as she struggles to maintain relationships. It is progress that she is now able to maintain good relationships.

A recently placed child's social worker said:

Staff have developed positive relationships with her very quickly. Behaviour is improving greatly due to the consistent boundaries applied.

When a child goes missing from the home, staff follow the procedures outlined in the child's individual missing person policy. One of the children has a significant history of going missing. However, over the last several months such incidents have reduced greatly. Staff have completed work with the child to enable her to recognise the dangers associated with this risky behaviour. The child said: 'I now don't want to stay out all night wandering around as it scares me and I realise it's not a good idea to be on the streets all night. Being here is the best thing for me.'

Children receive sanctions for negative behaviour, and positive behaviour is encouraged with rewards. The sanctions given are restorative in nature and fair and proportionate. Rewards include an extra activity such as going out for a meal or coffee. Children also enjoy being able to earn extra pocket money by completing chores around the home. This helps to reinforce positive behaviour further.

All of the children have a positive behaviour support plan in place. These highlight known triggers and aid staff to reduce the need for physical interventions. Records show that the staff are successful in implementing the strategies and de-escalation techniques detailed. Actual physical intervention is used infrequently and always as an absolute last resort. At the last inspection, a regulatory shortfall was identified in the manager not

speaking with staff about the measure of control used after an intervention, and a requirement was set. This requirement is restated, as staff are still not routinely receiving a debrief after an incident.

There have been no safeguarding incidents since the last inspection. The designated officer said: 'This home seeks appropriate advice and I have no concerns.' Staff spoken with have a clear understanding of safeguarding procedures and recognise that they have a duty to safeguard the children.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The registered manager has been in post since April 2015. She is in the process of working her notice and the newly appointed manager started in August 2017. There has been a good handover of duties, and the home continues to be well managed. The managers are ambitious for the children, and there is a clear development programme for the home. This details the strengths of the home and the areas that the new manager would like to develop. Staff are dedicated and committed to working well with the manager to ensure that the children's progress is continual. A staff member said: 'I'm very happy. I feel the home is very well managed and we work really well as a team.'

The manager and staff have built good, honest relationships with professionals. All spoken with are very complimentary about how staff interact with both them and the children. Social workers report that communication is excellent, that they receive detailed reports and that there is no delay in the reporting of any incidents. One said: 'Staff have developed very positive relationships and [child] speaks highly of them. Communication is great, good partnership working with good quality weekly reports.'

Newly recruited staff benefit from a comprehensive induction and staff have access to a wide range of training opportunities. All of the staff have completed their mandatory training and either hold, or are in the process of undertaking, the required level 3 diploma. However, staff have not completed the required diploma-level qualification within the agreed timescale. While this delay has not had a direct impact on the care provided, it fails to ensure that all staff are suitably qualified.

A requirement set at the last inspection regarding gaining the children's views about their home is met. Children are now very much involved in the running of the home. They are encouraged to share their views through monthly consultation forms and in the children's meetings. Evidence shows that they have chosen the decor in the home and any requests regarding changes to their daily routines have been considered and implemented when appropriate.

Staff receive yearly appraisals and attend regular team meetings, and managers provide good-quality supervision. However, there are gaps in supervision, and not all staff have received supervision in line with the home's own policy. Staff report that informal supervision is always available and that they are well supported in their role. There is no evidence that this shortfall has resulted in any inconsistencies in practice. However, it has

the potential to do so if not addressed.

Managers and staff have in-depth knowledge of the children. Staff complete detailed daily records, which include individual progress made. The manager meticulously monitors the care practice to ensure that any practice issues are promptly actioned. The daily reports provide the basis of a comprehensive weekly report for the child's social worker. Alongside this, monthly audits of all records emphasise any changes or patterns in behaviour and help contribute further to care planning meetings held at six weekly intervals. A social worker said: 'What I really like about this home is the six-week assessment/report they complete. It contains information on progress and therapeutic input and is very detailed. Very good, I couldn't ask for better.'

## **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:** SC489970

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

**Registered provider:** Barford Children's Services Limited

**Registered provider address:** The Old Coach House, Drinsey Nook, Lincoln LN1 2JJ

**Responsible individual:** Emma Carrington

**Registered manager:** Rebecca Grimshaw

## Inspector

Lynne Drage, social care inspector

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