

SC480705

Registered provider: Arc HD Services Ltd

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 three children with emotional, behavioural and/or mental health difficulties. The accommodation is set in three individual living areas, with shared communal space.

The home has a permanent manager who was registered with Ofsted in December 2015.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 September 2019

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

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: 16 April 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/04/2018	Full	Outstanding
25/04/2017	Full	Outstanding
18/10/2016	Full	Good
27/06/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children enjoy warm and nurturing relationship with staff and make exceptional progress. The safe environment allows children to feel emotionally 'held', enabling them to manage the transition from secure hospital placements into this community-based home. Children talk positively about the staff and the support they receive. The atmosphere and interactions are of a familial nature, conveying a sense of belonging. Staff hold children and their individual needs and wishes in mind when making day-to-day or more complex decisions.

Children are confident in their surroundings and when talking to the dedicated staff who support them. Individual sessions between children and staff are focused on specific goals and targets, in addition to ad-hoc discussions or sessions on matters that have arisen during the week. Children say that they like the staff in the home and recognise that although they may not agree with what staff ask them to do, they know it is in their best interests.

Children learn to process and manage their emotions through the thoughtful approach of staff to children's care. Highly effective liaison by staff with mental health professionals ensures that children benefit from seamless transitions from hospital-based care into the home and community. The home has protective fixtures and furnishings which allow children freedom and space to learn to self-regulate in their own personal areas within the home, with minimal risks.

Children attend education in local schools and colleges. Where necessary, staff support children with homework and provide assistance in the classroom. Close liaison between home and school staff ensures that children who are struggling in any educational or social aspect of the school or college day get the help they require.

Children are prepared well for their next steps through an individually planned independence programme. Children are supported to consider healthy lifestyles, and what this means for them when they move on to independence. Recently, children have been helped to consider how to eat healthily on a budget and how to manage feeling alone. Staff keep memento boxes for children of trips and positive experiences for when they move on. Staff remain in contact with children who move on, to provide emotional and practical support.

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

Children's actions and demeanour suggest that they feel safe in their home. Children openly approach staff with worries or concerns. Staff are skilled in recognising small changes in children's presentation, and in responding to these cues. Staff are acutely aware of each child's vulnerabilities, but do not allow these to be exacerbated, using guidance from mental health colleagues in responding to children's negative feelings. Children can access the home's advocate if they feel they need to talk to someone other than the staff in the home.

Staff respond effectively to safeguarding concerns, reporting these to partner agencies within the local authority as required. Staff are not risk-averse and support children to be

as independent as possible despite children's histories of self-injury and/or eating disorders. Each child's bedroom and individual lounge is a safe space while also acknowledging the need for it to be a homely environment. Children are encouraged to look after their spaces and keep them clean and tidy. Those who are approaching adulthood are afforded increased responsibility, which can lead to some chaotic and messy living spaces. Staff regularly remind children to tidy and offer support. However, it is not easy to understand the progress of plans to help children to keep their rooms clean and tidy because the steps taken to support them with this are not always recorded.

Staff demonstrate a highly developed understanding that all children's actions are a form of communication, and respond with a low-arousal approach, without minimising children's feelings. Close working with partner agencies and the home's therapeutic team supports children to redirect their distress and upset into safer and more positive channels of expression. This open culture in the home means that children feel safe, but not overly restricted.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager promotes an aspirational approach to care. Staff say that they are well supported and inspired to provide high-quality and thoughtful care to children. They feel that they genuinely work as a team and are able to constructively challenge others in a safe way. Staff are enthusiastic about their roles and enjoy the learning opportunities on offer, particularly from the monthly sessions with mental health practitioners. Staff also find reflective sessions of great benefit in ensuring that their practice is holding children at the centre of their approach, as well as supporting them to meet children's needs.

Leaders and managers closely monitor children's progress against their plans and targets. The effective use of colour in plans shows children and staff what has been achieved, no matter how small. Records are clear, with a focus on progress and information-sharing, to ensure a genuinely cohesive approach to care and planning.

Strong joint-working with partner agencies ensures that children experience consistency in planning and care. The managers are confident in challenging services that are not placing the child at the centre of decision-making.

The managers have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and how well practice is meeting the aims and ethos set out in the statement of purpose. The change in independent visitor since the last inspection has provided greater rigour and challenge. This, in addition to managers' monitoring and six-monthly evaluation results in highly effective planning and development for the home and quality of care. The managers keep up to date with changes and developments in approaches to care for children with emotional well-being and mental health needs to ensure that the home continues to provide relevant, high-quality care.

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

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9) Specifically, demonstrate that staff have offered to support children in keeping their personal spaces clean and tidy.

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: SC480705

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Arc HD Services Ltd

Registered provider address: Arc HD Services, Wessex House, Upper Market Street, Eastleigh SO50 9FD

Responsible individual: Martin Rose

Registered manager: Katherine Openshaw

Inspector

Jennie Christopher, social care inspector

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