

Spark of Genius West Cottage Care Home Service

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Telephone: 0141 587 2710

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 15 November 2017

Service provided by:
Spark of Genius (Training) Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2006008009

Care service number:
CS2016349363

About the service

This service registered with the Care Inspectorate on 24 October 2016.

Spark of Genius West Cottage is a children's care home registered to care for a maximum of 5 children and young people between the ages of 10 and 18 years. West Cottage is a detached property in an attractive semi-rural setting in Bishopton, Renfrewshire.

The service, which is provided by Spark of Genius Limited, operates over 24 hours, 52 weeks of the year. There is a full-time manager, assistant manager to manage the service with a dedicated team of child care residential workers and a senior practitioner.

Children and young people living in West Cottage will be referred by their local authorities and will either attend their own school, a local school/college or the registered education facility run by the provider.

At the time of the inspection, there were 5 young people living in West Cottage.

What people told us

We spoke with three young people and observed the interactions between staff members and a fourth young person. Young people were positive about living in West Cottage and although one stated a preference for living with family, still considered West Cottage a good place to live.

Food was described as good and young people confirmed they chose the menu weekly for the menu for the week ahead.

All young people told us they had staff who they could talk to and they got help when they felt worried or anxious. One young person thought there could be more social contact between the other young people living in Spark of Genius houses. We were told staff took them out and made individual time for them. Young people knew who their key workers were, but were not clear as to their role. All young people knew how to raise a complaint and confirmed being able to talk with the manager and external manager if needed. One young person thought staff could do more to address name calling and the behaviour of others could lead to feeling unsafe.

Two young people expressed being happy with their bedroom and stated staff respected their privacy. Another young person disliked his bedroom as the furnishings were "too dark" and it looked like a "hotel room" and there was no bath in the en suite which would have been a preference over a shower.

Rules were described as fair and young people considered living in West Cottage was better over recent months.

Self assessment

This was not requested for this inspection year.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	4 - Good
Quality of environment	4 - Good
Quality of staffing	4 - Good
Quality of management and leadership	4 - Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

We considered the staff team had worked hard over some months to provide a safe, secure and nurturing environment within West Cottage after a very unsettled period following the opening of the service in October 2016. Young people were responding well to daily routines and consistent care. Safety was prioritised with risk assessment and management plans identifying areas of vulnerability and the interventions to use to reduce potential harm. There had been a reduction in absconding, offending, self-harm and episodes of volatile behaviour. The need to 'safely hold' young people had reduced considerably.

The staff team were proactive in seeking medical support for young people. All young people were registered with primary healthcare providers, such as general practitioners, opticians and dental practices. Staff also sought specialist support for young people when needed and there had been extremely sensitive work undertaken in regards to supporting good sexual health. Staff members were responsive to the mental health struggles of some young people and worked alongside CAMH's (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) to assist young people. Further support was available to staff and young people by an independent child psychologist funded by the provider. The senior practitioner had collated reading materials on impact of childhood trauma to further support staff learning and understanding on the very relevant topic.

There were particularly good outcomes in relation to achievement with all school age children attending Spark of Genius schools despite, for some, significant challenges in previous educational placements. Well established bedtime routines meant that children were well rested before school and therefore able to learn and participate during the school day. Link meetings were taking place between West Cottage and the schools to ensure that educational support needs were being addressed and progress monitored. We could see very good support provided to an older child with a career ambition becoming achievable.

We looked at the support plans and associated documentation for two young people. We considered that these required restructuring and condensing in order to present a cohesive overview of the main aims of the placement and how these would be met. We also considered that participation of the young people required being central when goal setting to increase the likelihood of good outcomes and the opportunity to develop life skills. The daily recording tool was not being used as intended, which was unfortunate, as this had potential to address the cumbersome recording methods in use.

We noted that key time meeting and case team meetings were occurring, however, considered they should be more frequent and focused. We acknowledge the issues raised have been identified as an area for ongoing improvement in the service development plan and will look at progress at the next inspection.

We observed that the table was not fully set at meal times and although children were offered food we considered it would be better practice to have the table laid with food, which in doing so may encourage those, who may otherwise decline, to eat when seeing and smelling the food. We also considered that the table should be more attractively laid with a tablecloth and table mats. We were told this would be addressed immediately.

Incidents of bullying behaviour were not recorded in keeping with the provider's guidance. The current anti-bullying plan was not progressing (refer to recommendation 1).

There appeared to be limited recreational opportunities and young people were not engaged in any clubs or hobbies. We asked that this be a focus now that the house is becoming established and young people are now more settled (refer to recommendation 2).

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded along with the action to be taken in keeping with the Spark of Genius policy on bullying.

National Care Standards care homes for children and young people - Standard 6.9: Feeling safe and secure.

2. The service should explore ways to increase the social and recreational opportunities for young people.

National Care Standards care homes for children and young people - Standard 15.1: Daily life.

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

West Cottage was an extremely attractive and spacious house situated in a picturesque semi-rural setting with outstanding views. On the days of inspection the house was clean tidy and there was a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere. Young people had access to all areas of the house with the exception of the office which, we considered, significantly impacted on any sense of the house being an institution. There were two lounges, a smaller games room and a large kitchen leading to a dining room which gave the young people space and quiet time if they wished this. The house was furnished with quality items.

Each young person had their own bedroom which was well furnished and had enough space for belongings. All young people had a lock on their door and held keys to their rooms. Three of the young people had en suite facilities and the remaining two young people shared a bathroom. Young people had been involved in choosing bedding and personal items for their rooms and were as a result of taking ownership of their rooms and enjoyed relaxing in them.

Staff ensured good security and requested visitors to show identification and sign the visitor's book on entry. Staff used the environment well ensuring supervision of children whilst still giving space and time for privacy.

The back garden was spacious and was proving a good play area for the young people. Play equipment had been installed and more was planned. We could see that children and young people enjoyed the garden.

Good arrangements were in place with the maintenance team and we could see recent damage to the property had been repaired promptly. However, we could see there were small outstanding repairs needed, such as missing door and furniture handles and we asked that the service take more care to ensure these are reported and attended to in order to retain the high standard of the house.

Health and safety procedures were in place, such as food safety practices and conducting fires safety checks and evacuations.

The communal areas of the house had no pictures or art work on the walls. As a result, the house appeared sparse in places. The plans for young people to create art work had not been achieved and we suggested other ways this could be carried out, i.e. photography. There were no lamps due to previous vandalism and several sets of curtains required to be replaced. This meant the house was not as homely as it could be, particularly in the evening, which was unfortunate as the house had the potential to be outstanding. The manager and assistant manager advised they were addressing this.

There was a lack of toys, games, books and educational resources within the house, therefore, we could not consider West Cottage as providing an educationally rich environment (refer to recommendation 1).

The kitchen units were in need of replacing or repair to be in keeping with the higher standards through the rest of the house. The kitchen could benefit from more units and worktop areas given the amount of people it has to serve (refer to recommendation 2).

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. Young people should have access to a wide range of toys, books and educational/play learning resources within the house.

National Care Standards care homes for children and young people - Standard 5: Your environment and Standard 15: Daily life.

2. Improvements should be made to the kitchen.

National Care Standards care homes for children and young people - Standard 5: Your environment.

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

We were impressed with the positivity and motivation of the staff team at West Cottage. Staff told us that while the service had a challenging beginning the young people now living in the service were settled and that meaningful relationships were being established. We observed interactions between staff and young people as being warm and respectful. Staff attributed the positive changes within West Cottage to the manager who had empowered them by being extremely supportive, helpful and approachable and additional support from the external management and the assistant manager to establish routines, boundaries and expectations. There were good staffing levels which meant young people received the care and supervision required.

Staff told us that training opportunities were good and that they received supervision and opportunities for informal supervision. We could see some progress had been made in mandatory training which included child protection and Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI). We observed a decline in significant events and safe holds following the training of staff in TCI. The recent team development day had included an introduction to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and in discussion with staff we were satisfied staff knew when and how to report child protection concerns, including the indicators of CSE. We were aware that there was still a drive for additional training for the team and we suggested the manager complete a training plan for the forthcoming year to plan for this commitment.

There were good systems for communicating information, including formal handover meetings between shift and the use of a daily handover record. Placing social workers told us staff members were diligent at informing them of events and we could see regular contact was in place with parents and relatives.

Most staff members were all registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and plans were in place for those who were not registered to do this within six months from the commencement of their employment. The manager was aware there would be a considerable commitment to ensure all staff members were registered without training conditions within the mandatory timeframe laid down by the SSSC.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

The current management of the service had been instrumental in bringing about structures, supports and systems necessary to improve the outcomes for young people.

A good management presence meant the staff team and young people were supported and management had a clear understanding of the dynamics within the house. Regular team meetings gave the team the opportunity to plan, reflect and a further forum for management to provide guidance.

Satisfaction surveys of staff, young people and stakeholders told us that West Cottage was proving an improved level of care than when the house first opened. External management audits and a comprehensive independent audit identified strengths and areas where improvement was needed. The collective findings of the audits and surveys had shaped a comprehensive development plan which the team were driving forward. We could see whilst positive steps had been taken, there was still much to be achieved. However, as the service is now out of crisis the team are in a much stronger place to achieve this. The manager was now focusing on 'up skilling' the team, some of who were relatively new to this field of work and improving the quality of support plan recording in order to maximise good outcomes.

There had been an analysis of incidents and safe holds which demonstrated that staff had a growing competence in managing crisis situations. This was continually reviewed and monitored and plans were in place to link this to service and individual training and support needs.

The organisation was compiling an updated overarching development plan for the organisation with a manager's development day imminent. We were told this would dovetail with the plans of individual services where common themes for improvement were found.

The service had a complaints process which was known to young people and an independent advocate was a visitor to the home. The 'Spark Parliament' had resumed and this gave another opportunity to young people to express their view to the provider.

The service was notifying the Care Inspectorate of significant occurrences within timescales.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

Inspection and grading history

This service does not have any prior inspection history or grades.

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