

2726456

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties and/or special educational needs and/or disabilities.

This home was registered with Ofsted on 11 October 2023. Since then, the registered manager has left the home and a new manager has been appointed. The manager has submitted an application to register with Ofsted.

There were no children living at the home at the time of this inspection. The inspector spoke with the provider, the home's manager and two local authority social workers.

Inspection date: 6 January 2025

Date of last inspection: 24 April 2024

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

Since the home opened, there have been significant changes in staffing. The former registered manager left in October 2024. Shortly afterwards, senior managers were dissatisfied with the quality of care provided to children. They ended the placements of the two children living in the home and ended the employment of all staff, except for the deputy manager.

Despite this action, feedback from children and local authority representatives about children's experiences was positive. Children's discussions with managers and comments made at children in care reviews indicate that children enjoyed living at the home, that they had positive relationships with key staff, were settled, made steady progress and had good experiences. Both children's independent reviewing officers recommended at the children's reviews that they should remain living at the home as this was in their best interests.

Social workers said children generally had good experiences and were kept safe. One social worker said, 'It was a positive match, with good information shared. [Name of child] had a good relationship with the manager and the deputy, who then completed shifts to support him. He got on well with the other boys. He told me that he had good experiences in the home and [it] was a place where he wanted to stay.'

Another local authority social worker said, '[Name of child] was safeguarded and his needs were met. He received support with his education and therapeutic needs. He said that he felt safe and that he did not want to move, he was settled. The influence of other young people made his placement difficult.'

Managers ensured that children's moves to their new placements were well organised and coordinated. Children's relatives and prospective care staff received information about this home and how staff worked with the children. They were also invited to visit children at the home and speak with managers to gain a good understanding of children's needs.

Despite these positive views, management oversight of the home is not strong. Many of the issues highlighted for improvement at the last full inspection remain unresolved and some requirements and recommendations are repeated.

The quality of some children's risk assessments is poor and they do not highlight all known risks or offer staff strategies to help reduce risks. Managers do not ensure that staff training is effective, and that training has a positive impact on staff's practice. Monitoring systems have not helped to improve the quality of the service. Some care plans are not specific in identifying children's needs and what action is

required to ensure these needs are met. These were all issues highlighted for improvement at the last inspection.

The home's locality risk assessment still does not include the views of key partners such as the police. Managers began to consult with partners but have not followed up on obtaining their responses.

The previous inspection highlighted the need for managers to devise an effective workforce development plan. They have made a start in devising a plan for the staffing and development of the home. However, these plans are incomplete, vague and insufficiently detailed, and objectives are not well formed. As a result, these plans are not effective in driving service improvement.

Managers are in the process of devising an amended and appropriate statement of purpose. This has not yet been shared with Ofsted. The amended children's guide is also incomplete. Managers are working with external consultants to assist with policy and key document reviews, and with employment policies and practice. Staff training, induction and supervision processes have been revised and enhanced. Managers are in the process of recruiting a staff team to provide care to children when the home reopens.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/04/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be 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, The 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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— 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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(c)(e)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all known risks are included in risk assessments to help to manage and reduce risks. In addition, the registered person must consider all needs of children moving into the home and of those already living there and the staff's skills when considering new children moving into the home. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	1 February 2025

The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(e)(f)(h)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that staff have the appropriate support and skills to appropriately care for children and promote their welfare. Leaders and managers must ensure that recording systems are used effectively so they can monitor the service to ensure improvement, and that there is continued learning. Leaders and managers must also ensure that an effective development plan is devised for the home. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	1 February 2025
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each	1 February 2025

calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1) (2)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that safeguarding partners are consulted and feedback is obtained to inform the local area risk assessment. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that they have copies of children's up-to-date local authority plans. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	1 February 2025
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;	1 February 2025

the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that restraint records demonstrate appropriate management oversight and review to ensure that they include full details of any use of restraint. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))	1 February 2025
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— develop positive relationships with them; engage with them; and	1 February 2025

take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives.

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—

ensure that staff—

keep the children's guide and the home's complaints procedure under review and seek children's comments before revising either document.

(Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(c))

Recommendations

- The registered person should have a workforce plan. The plan should be updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home and used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of staff. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful and clear recording. In particular, this refers to recording the home's care plans. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2726456

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Responsible individual: Creanna Dodson

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sandra Jacobs-Walls, Social Care Inspector

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