

1216505

Registered provider: Hennessy Living Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private provider owns and manages this home. The home provides care for up to five children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

The home has been without a registered manager since November 2021. Three managers have been appointed and have left the home since that time. A manager had not been appointed at the time of this inspection.

There are two children currently living in the home. Inspectors spoke to and observed one child, and spoke with the other child over the phone.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 January 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 13 October 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection:

On 14 February 2022, a monitoring visit was carried out. This visit was in response to information that was shared with Ofsted that indicated a potential risk of harm to children. During this visit, inspectors found several regulatory breaches that

impacted on the children's safety, protection and welfare. In response, Ofsted issued a compliance notice under regulation 13.

On 18 February 2022, the provider made the decision to temporarily close the home and all the children moved out.

On 24 February 2022, Ofsted issued a notice of proposal to vary the conditions of registration. This required the provider to inform Ofsted of their intention to accommodate children at least three months before they admitted any children into the home. This proposal was accepted by the provider. Therefore, Ofsted issued the notice of decision to this effect.

On 12 May 2022, a monitoring visit was carried out to monitor the provider's response to addressing the steps identified in the compliance notice. Due to the home's closure, the provider was unable to demonstrate that they had met the steps. Therefore, Ofsted reissued the compliance notice under regulation 13.

On 8 August 2022, a monitoring visit was carried out. The provider demonstrated some progress and met one of the steps identified in the compliance notice. A further compliance notice under regulation 13 was issued to address the steps that had not been met.

On 18 October 2022, a monitoring visit was carried out to monitor the provider's response to the compliance notice. The provider demonstrated that the steps in the compliance notice were met, and Ofsted agreed to remove the three-month condition. However, due to the home's conditions, insufficient staffing arrangements and the lack of a suitably qualified manager, Ofsted issued a notice of proposal to impose a change to the provider's conditions, to reduce the number of children that the provider can care for from five to two. The provider appealed against the proposal and provided evidence that there was sufficient staffing and management oversight. In response, Ofsted did not issue the notice of decision to change conditions.

On 4 November 2022, the provider opened the home and, shortly afterwards, children moved in.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/10/2021	Full	Good
17/08/2021	Full	Inadequate
28/01/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness
07/05/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Children's experiences of living in the home are mixed. Some children like living in the home.

Children have formed positive relationships with some of the staff and they enjoy activities together, such as cooking and shopping. However, due to staff leaving and the high turnover of staff, some relationships for the children have ended quickly. This is unsettling for children.

Children are consulted and encouraged to share their views and express how they feel. The staff listen to children's feedback and, in most instances, use this to influence children's care. However, in one example, a child made a complaint about a member of staff. This was not well documented by the provider, so assurances cannot be provided that this has been fully explored and investigated.

Children have a key worker who provides one-to-one key-work sessions. However, sessions are unplanned and do not link well to the children's needs. Furthermore, these sessions are not evaluated, and the records do not show how the staff intend to address any issues or help the child to improve the situation. This affects the quality of the support children receive.

Children receive a warm welcome and are supported to settle into the home. The provider speaks to the child's social worker and their previous carers to gather information that helps the staff to plan for the child's move. Although children's moves occur quickly, they do receive an introductory visit and, where appropriate, an overnight stay to help them prepare for their move.

School attendance has improved for children who have experienced long periods of absence. The staff understand the barriers that affect children's educational progress, so they talk to children about the benefits of learning and attending school. One education professional described a child's engagement in school as, 'the best they have ever been; [name of child] seems happier.'

The home has a bright and homely atmosphere. Children are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms and they make these spaces comfortable and enjoyable. One child said, 'I love the home.'

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

When children move into the home, they are supported to understand what they should do if there was a fire. The provider consults with fire experts, who provide advice on fire prevention and the strategies that the staff should follow to reduce

the risk of fire. However, the provider has failed to ensure that the staff follow these strategies. For example, none of the fire extinguishers were in the correct locations in the home, and one was in a locked cupboard. In addition, one fire exit was blocked. This was brought to the responsible individual's attention during the inspection, and immediate action was taken to address the issues identified.

Some new staff have been recruited. However, in two examples, the provider did not follow safe recruitment practice. The employment history of one staff member was not thoroughly checked and there was no record to show that another staff member's identification had been checked. During the inspection, the responsible individual took action to address this shortfall. This is a repeated theme and, therefore, a requirement has been reissued.

Children's behaviour is not managed consistently. The provider has failed to provide the staff with clear guidance in the children's plans on what inappropriate behaviours warrant a consequence, and what this should be. On the rare occasions that consequences are used, they are not restorative in nature, and they are not reviewed by the provider to ensure that they are fair, proportionate and necessary.

The staff encourage the children to spend time socialising with their friends and families. However, the staff assume that the children are safe and do not make thorough enquiries to understand how the children are spending their time and who they are with. This is despite children's vulnerabilities, such as risks of exploitation.

There have been a few incidents of children going missing from the home. When this does occur, the missing-from-home procedures are followed. For example, the staff look for the child and work in partnership with other agencies, who also help. In most incidents, return home interviews have not been completed in a timely manner. However, this has recently been addressed effectively by the responsible individual.

The staff regularly review the children's individual risk assessments. Overall, these assessments include the children's vulnerabilities and the strategies that the staff should follow to help the children to stay safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Staff retention remains a significant challenge in this home. The home has been without a permanent manager for 14 months. Since the home has reopened, two managers, the responsible individual and half of the staff team have suddenly left. The provider has recruited more staff. However, the lack of stability in the staff team, which is a repeated theme, prevents the children from building and sustaining positive relationships with trusted adults.

The provider has missed an opportunity to support and develop the staff team. While staff supervision sessions do take place, these are not completed within the time frames that are detailed in the provider's policy. This is despite all the staff

being in the probationary stage of their employment. This means that the staff do not receive the support that they need to reflect on their practice and learn.

Children do not receive care from a qualified staff team. Staff training is predominantly online, and the staff are progressing through the provider's mandatory training programme. Some staff have yet to complete all of the courses, and none of the staff, including the recently appointed deputy managers, have the required qualification. Staff are enrolled on the relevant course to achieve this.

The quality of children's records is poor. The provider has not ensured that the staff understand the home's record-keeping procedure, so some children's records are incomplete. In addition, some of the children's records were amended and completed in retrospect on the day of the inspection. This affects the quality of children's records and the information available to track children's progress, and raises questions about the authenticity of these records.

The provider does not ensure that the home's statement of purpose is up to date with the current service offer and that this is sent to Ofsted as required. This is a repeated theme and this requirement has therefore been raised again.

During the past four weeks, a new responsible individual has been appointed. She has provided the staff with advice and guidance and has carried out audits to identify gaps and shortfalls in practice. Early indications suggest that the new leader's contribution has been beneficial in improving the staff's practice.

Staff speak positively about working in the home, and they feel that they support each other well. The staff said that they need permanent leadership to help them to improve their practice and confidence, and to establish consistency of care.

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 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; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(vi))	17 February 2023
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;	17 March 2023

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))	
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))	17 March 2023
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home; provide adequate means of escape from the home in the event of fire. (Regulation 25 (1)(a)(b))	17 March 2023
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the 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))	17 March 2023

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; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))	17 March 2023
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (3))	17 March 2023

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: 1216505

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hennessy Living Group Limited

Registered provider address: Rickleton 1B, Bowes Offices, Lambton Park,
Chester Le Street DH3 4AN

Responsible individual: Lindsey Newbury

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Catherine Heron, Social Care Inspector
Cherie Chen, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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