

1230268

Registered provider: Kites Children Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is one of two children's homes operated by a private provider. The home provides specialist therapeutic care and treatment for up to five children.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2016.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 June 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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: 12 October 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/10/2021	Full	Good
10/06/2019	Full	Good
14/08/2018	Full	Good
28/11/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

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

One child has moved into the home and one child has moved on since the last inspection. Children make progress from their starting points. However, shortfalls in managers following the safeguarding procedures, combined with reduced managerial oversight, undermine the quality of care for children.

The home provides ample space for children. However, there are areas that need immediate attention. The kitchen floor and worktops are worn. A purposeful wild garden contains a lot of weeds and nettles and a dilapidated greenhouse that could pose a risk to children. One child does not have suitable furniture to store their clothes. One small bathroom was found to be poorly lit. Ensuring that children have fit-for-purpose facilities is important as they are being encouraged to maintain their own personal hygiene. Overall, several improvements are necessary to ensure a nurturing environment that consistently meets the children's needs.

Staff actively support the children's education. Children who were not previously engaging in education have improved levels of attendance and attainment. One child attends a mechanical engineering course at college. This child has recently secured a job, which is a very positive outcome.

Staff support a wide range of activities that reflect the children's interests and hobbies. The dedicated staff team plans exciting activities with the children. These include trips to an indoor skydiving centre, trampoline parks and escape rooms. Children also go to concerts and enjoy short breaks in London. These activities have provided the children with meaningful experiences that have enhanced their well-being.

The staff develop warm and positive relationships with children and know them well. Children spoken with during the inspection provided good feedback about the staff and said that they enjoy spending time with them.

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

On two occasions, managers have failed to follow safeguarding procedures when concerns have been raised about the staff. In one instance, an allegation of harm was not shared with the local authority designated officer until an external prompt was provided. This means that there was a delay in external oversight. In another case, following a disclosure made by a child about a member of agency staff, immediate protective measures were implemented, and an internal investigation was carried out, with substantiated findings. However, the concern was not shared with the local authority designated officer and the internal investigation lacked rigour and depth. Furthermore, actions to reduce risks, including daily checks on closed-circuit

television, were not completed within the identified timescales. Failing to follow the procedures could increase the risk of harm to children.

The staff use consequential sanctions with children as part of a wider approach to behaviour management. However, the recording and monitoring of these measures are not effective. Many sanctions involve financial reparations over a long period and have not been monitored well. Some records do not include information on the effectiveness of each measure and children's views are not always obtained. Managerial oversight is missing on a high number of sanctions records sampled. Therefore, the intended safeguards of ensuring fairness, consistency and proportionality are not fully realised for children.

Generally, staff respond to conflicts between children well and ensure that the immediate situation is de-escalated. However, following one significant incident between two children, staff's responses and one-to-one discussions were delayed. Furthermore, staff failed to ensure that a restorative meeting was facilitated. Consequently, the children have not had adequate opportunities to resolve their differences and improve their relationships with each other.

Children's risk management plans are detailed and regularly updated. They cover a range of risks and behaviours and include individual strategies that staff use to support the children. The staff regularly meet to monitor children's progress in therapy and review their risks. This contributes to staff having a good understanding of children's behaviours and how to reduce risks.

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

The manager is experienced, qualified and child focused. However, the manager is undertaking additional shifts in the home, including waking-nights and has additional responsibilities in overseeing another home in the organisation. This has reduced his capacity to ensure that there is consistent and effective oversight of children's care. Consequently, there are several weaknesses identified in the leadership and management of the home.

Internal managerial monitoring needs improvement. Access to staff training records is unwieldy. The manager does not have clear oversight of training and has delayed completing a full training matrix. This is despite this being recommended by the independent person through external monitoring visits. There is a high number of open tasks on the staff's electronic recording system which, if left unchecked, could lead to important information being missed. Issues around the home's location risk assessment have not been suitably addressed following the last inspection. Consequently, opportunities to identify and action improvements in care have been missed.

Staff are trained in a range of subjects that enhance their skills. However, training gaps have been identified in safe ligature removal and attention deficit hyperactivity

disorder awareness. This does not ensure that all staff have the necessary skills to understand and safely respond to all the children's needs.

Systems for notifying Ofsted are usually effective. However, on one occasion, an allegation against a staff member was responded to but was not notified. As a result, Ofsted's capacity to monitor safeguarding arrangements has been reduced.

Regular supervision meetings are held with staff. However, these meetings do not always provide staff with sufficient opportunity to reflect on the safeguarding culture at the home. Furthermore, staff who should have received an appraisal have yet to do so within the required time frame. The staff do not always receive the support that they should do.

Feedback from parents and professionals is mixed. Some positive feedback was received about the quality of support provided. However, other responses highlighted concerns around levels of communication and a poor experience for a child who moved on from the home.

The internal quality of care review contains areas of good evaluation. However, views from staff and families are not taken into account. The objectives identified for improvement are not specific or measurable. This limits the effectiveness of this quality assurance measure and does not contribute to continuous developments in practice.

The manager understands the improvements that need to be made and has taken some immediate steps to address the shortfalls identified.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)) In particular, ensure that: adequate bedroom furniture is provided; bathroom areas are welcoming, with sufficient lighting levels; and other areas of the home are maintained to a high standard to meet children's needs.	31 August 2022
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 the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(e)) In particular, ensure that: referrals are made without delay to the local authority designated officer when allegations of abuse against staff occur; and internal investigations following safeguarding concerns are thorough and identified actions are addressed.	30 June 2022

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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) Specifically, ensure that training in safe ligature removal and understanding attention deficit hyperactivity disorder is sourced and attended.	17 July 2022
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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))	30 June 2022
The registered person must ensure that all employees— have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(c))	24 July 2022
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 effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and	30 June 2022

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)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c))	30 June 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff have the skills required to address bullying behaviours effectively. In particular, they should ensure that children have support and opportunities to resolve their differences. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.16)
- The registered person should ensure that staff's skills and knowledge in good safeguarding practice are consolidated through individual supervision meetings. ('Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.14)
- The registered person should develop effective working relationships with each child's placing authority and with other relevant persons. In particular, the registered person should ensure that levels of communication agreed with parents and professionals are adhered to. ('Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.3)
- The registered person should ensure that the internal quality of care review clearly identifies actions required and how those actions will be addressed to secure continuous improvement at the home. ('Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

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: 1230268

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Kites Children Services Limited

Registered provider address: The Forge, Langham, Colchester CO4 5PX

Responsible individual: Deborah Carr

Registered manager: Peter McGugan

Inspector

Mark Anderton, Social Care Inspector

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