

1240449

Registered provider: Idem Living Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private company owns the home. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for three children who may have physical and/or learning disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2021.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 20 January 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2021

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: 17 July 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/07/2019	Full	Good
22/05/2018	Full	Good
08/02/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
06/06/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Children have been unsettled by the numerous staffing changes in the home. A new staff team is in place and the children are building positive relationships with staff. A child said that the staff looked after them well, and that he felt safe here.

Staff understand the importance of clear, consistent routines for the children and how these help to reduce the children's anxieties. One child explained why the front door was closed and how it was to keep them safe.

Children enjoy a range of self-chosen activities. Some activities had to cease because of COVID-19; however, staff introduced a range of fun activities to do at home. Children are now enjoying going to the park, beaches, cinemas and local shops. As a result, children are becoming more confident to go out and to try new things.

One child excitedly told the inspector that they finally had a season ticket to see their football team. They thoroughly enjoy going to the matches with their family. The child spoke of the friendly rivalry between him and the staff over football and who is the best team.

Children's health and emotional well-being are managed well. Staff are quick to identify concerns for children and take swift action to support them.

Recently, an issue with the administration of some medication could have placed a child at risk. However, this was identified quickly, and staff took appropriate action to ensure the safety of the child. An investigation is ongoing into the incident and all staff have been reminded of the medication policies.

Children's education is well supported. Staff know the children's progress and the next steps for them. Staff helped the children to complete work online when unable to attend school. One child spoke about their new college placement and how this would help them to have a career in their chosen field.

Family time is supported by staff who understand the complexity of needs for the children and their families. With the restrictions of COVID-19 lifting, children can spend more time with their families and some children are enjoying overnight stays. This is a big step forward for children and is indicative of their increased confidence and self-esteem.

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

Staff have a sound understanding of child protection and safeguarding practice. Consequently, they can respond quickly to any emerging concerns. Staff understand the known and perceived risks to children.

However, during a recent incident, a member of staff did not report that a child had come home early from visiting family. This meant that, for a period of time, they were on their own with two children (both children are cared for on a one-to-one basis). This placed the children at the risk of harm as the home's policies were not followed.

Staff know the children well and can intervene quickly as they notice the subtle differences in their behaviour. Staff use kind words and calm voices to distract children and to help them to feel safe. Consequently, there have been no physical interventions since the last visit.

Professionals also said that staff are proactive in supporting children who struggle with their emotions. Professionals said that, even though children can display challenging and aggressive behaviours, they are supported well by staff who keep them safe. This has resulted in the level of support for one child being reduced.

The home has been repainted and communal areas are light, bright and welcoming. Children's bedrooms are highly personalised and reflect the children's individual passions and interests. However, on occasion, repair or remedial work is not carried out in a timely fashion. Similarly, locks fitted to doors on the ground floor are not in keeping with a family home. This can have an effect on the safety and well-being of the children.

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

The home has a new management team which is coming together to provide stability to the children and staff.

The home has experienced a turbulent year with COVID-19 and several unrelated staffing issues. This has resulted in 46 agency staff being used to cover shifts, as well as the registered manager and deputies working directly with the children. The home has experienced difficulties in recruiting suitable staff and has only recently filled the vacancies with one exception. As a result, several managerial tasks have not been carried out effectively.

Staff said that the past year has been difficult with all the changes in staffing. However, they feel that things are now stabilising, and the children remain their main priority. Parents said that the changes in staffing had been unsettling for their children, but they are now much happier.

A new independent person has been appointed and undertakes visits to the home. They speak to the staff, children, parents and professionals.

Monitoring by the registered manager has not identified the shortfalls from this inspection. Staffing rotas do not reflect the actual hours staff have worked. Several staff, including staff new to their role, have not received regular supervision or were late in undertaking their annual appraisals.

Record-keeping is inconsistent as plans do not reflect all the needs of the children. Records of any consequences given to children are not recorded. This does not promote transparency. Care plans and other records are not consistently recorded to a good standard. For example, plans do not refer to requirements of a deprivation of liberty order and the manager has not ensured that their plans are compliant with the order.

In addition, some documents are not signed by the author, and the manager's comments and evaluations are not recorded. Therefore, opportunities are not taken to reflect on the quality of the recording and make any necessary changes. Some records contain inappropriate or inflammatory language, such as absconding or harassing. This is not helpful in telling the story of the child's time here due to the use of stigmatising language.

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; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; and that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(v)(b))	20 December 2021
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;	20 December 2021

ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for 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; and 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)(d)(f)(h))	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— manage and review the placement of each child in the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)(2)(b)(ii)) In particular, this includes monitoring and reviewing the plans for children who are subject to a deprivation of liberty order.	20 December 2021
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c))	20 December 2021
The registered person must ensure that—	20 December 2021

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; 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)) Specifically, the registered person should maintain a record of any consequences given to children.	
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which—	20 December 2021

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))	
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; ensure that the records are kept up to date; and retain the records for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry. (Regulation 37 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c)) Specifically, the registered person should maintain a record of the actual hours worked by staff.	20 December 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should make best use of internal monitoring to identify shortfalls in practice, record keeping and use this information to drive forward continuous improvement in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.28)
- The registered person should ensure that records tell the story of the child's time in the home and that they are signed and dated by the member of staff making the entry. In addition, staff should not use inflammatory language such as harassing and absconding. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraphs 14.4, 14.5)

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: 1240449

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Idem Living Ltd

Registered provider address: 6 Stable Court, Business Centre Water Lane
Tarbock Green, Prescot L35 1RD

Responsible individual: Andrew Palmer and Julie Wright

Registered manager: Dean Humphreys

Inspector

Chris Scully, Social Care Inspector

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