

1249115

Registered provider: Care 4 Children Residential Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private company. The home provides medium-term to long-term therapeutic care and support to children. The children may also have social and emotional difficulties. The home offers placements for a maximum of four girls aged between 11 and 17 years.

The registered manager has been in post since August 2019. The registered manager was not available at the time of the inspection. An acting manager has yet to be appointed. The inspection was led by the responsible individual.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 May 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: 20 April 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/04/2021	Full	Good
21/05/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
19/06/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/12/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

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

The children's experiences of living at this home have been significantly affected by key members of staff leaving without sufficient notice. The relationships with the adults who provided a sense of safety were severed without warning. This left the children with several unanswered questions and a loss of trust in the staff team.

Within a short period of time, three children have moved from the home in an unplanned way. The staff were unable to help the children to cope with the difficult emotions they were experiencing. As a result, the progress the children made with the provider's in-house therapeutic programme was halted.

When staffing resources were sufficient, staff used the therapeutic programme to give important conversations a structured focus when talking to the children. This helped children to make progress in areas such as personal care, considering the views of others, and improving how to communicate in a more socially acceptable way.

Children attend the on-site school and make progress with their education. The working relationships between staff and teachers ensure that everyone is kept informed about how well the children are coping. Also, when frictions evolve in the children's relationships, staff and teachers take time out to explore the children's feelings and agree a way forward. This helps children to sustain their educational attendance and focus on their learning objectives.

Children complete incentive plans alongside staff on a weekly basis. These plans provide opportunity for the children to work towards achieving a weekly goal, often linked to developing their independence skills.

Parents value the efforts made by staff that enable the children to stay connected with their families. Staff facilitate the children's travel arrangements back to their home towns that are often far away, so they can see those who are most important to them. The inspector spoke with a parent whose child has now left the home. They said: 'They [staff] were brilliant at first; they communicated with us really well.'

Staff help children to occupy their time positively through planned relaxation, games and activities. They also take part in experiences away from the home, such as going to the cinema, or more adventurous excursions, such as theme parks. The staff capture memories by taking photos of children's enjoyable experiences, to allow them to reflect on the care they have received.

The home is well decorated and provides children with a comfortable living space. Damage that occurred inside the home during an unsettled period has been repaired to ensure that the warm and cosy feeling is maintained. Children also personalise

their bedrooms to their liking and have a relaxing space to take time out from the group if needed.

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

On occasions, staff have been unable to maintain the home as a place of safety for children. The negative impact on the children's well-being caused an escalation in their emotional vulnerabilities. The decision to move children out of the home reduced the risk of them being harmed. These decisions were undertaken in consultation with the children's social workers, in recognition of staff's struggle to keep all children safe.

One child who moved to temporary accommodation for a short period of time did not have sufficient staffing arrangements in line with their transition plan. The child was left with one staff member instead of two, despite needing an increased level of care. This did not provide adequate protection to the child.

Children experience a coordinated response from staff during incidents of going missing to help them return to the home. When there are significant concerns for their safety, staff escalate this with the police to seek their assistance. However, return home interviews are not consistently offered to children by external professionals after a missing incident. The manager's oversight of missing incidents does not consistently evaluate the effectiveness of staff practice, or that missing-from-home protocols are being followed. These shortfalls do not enable professionals to assess the level of risk and agree on the arrangements needed to protect children.

The use of restraint is proportionate when there is a risk of children being harmed. However, post-incident debriefs with children or staff have not occurred within the required timescales, as set out by the Children's Homes Regulations. On one occasion, a staff member who had completed a restraint was the only person to talk to the child about the incident. This does not allow children to express their feelings about their experience or raise a concern about the staff member's practice. The manager's monitoring has not recognised these shortfalls. This does not provide protection for children.

The regulator is not always notified about serious incidents that occur in a timely manner. This delays the regulator from having oversight and assurance that the children are protected from harm.

Managers explore referral information about children referred to the home with support from the clinical team. This helps children to experience a well-thought-out transition into the home, and they are welcomed by staff who already have a detailed insight into their needs. However, managers do not consistently evaluate a child's suitability to live with the other children already in residence. This could cause a disruption to all the children's lives.

Individualised risk assessments for each child are kept under regular review. The risk assessments are detailed and provide the staff with direction about how to keep the children safe. This helps to ensure that the staff have up-to-date strategies to follow to reduce the risk of harm for the children.

Children are provided with a consistent daily routine. They have key-work sessions and important conversations with staff that focus on developing better coping strategies when faced with difficult situations. They have been helped to improve their awareness of risks in relation to exploitation, self-harm and recognising unsafe situations. This has reduced the children's individual risks over time.

When concerns are raised about a staff member's practice, the manager follows the local safeguarding procedures and takes appropriate action to protect the children from harm. However, investigations into the concerns raised have been concluded without the oversight of the local authority designated officer. This could result in decisions being made that do not keep children safe.

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

The characteristics of good leadership and management are lacking at this home. The provider has not been able to secure effective management arrangements to lead the team in the absence of the registered manager. Plans to bring sufficient management and staffing support to the team have yet to be achieved.

Not all staff have regular supervision or appraisal of their performance to support them in their roles. This does not help them to cope with the demands that caring for children with complex needs can bring, or enable them to reflect and plan how best to care for the children.

Team meetings that involve staff, managers and the clinical psychologist provide a forum to discuss the operational challenges of the home, and an opportunity to explore the children's needs. However, meetings are not regular. This limits the team's ability to review and develop the children's plans.

The managerial records are disorganised and critical information about staff practice and the safeguarding of children is not easily accessible. This does not provide the regulator with reassurance that the recording systems help managers to have effective oversight of the children's care.

Monitoring by the independent visitor provides regular scrutiny of the quality of care children receive and assesses whether they are being safeguarded effectively. However, some reports submitted to the regulator have incomplete recordings of the visitor's findings. This demonstrates that the provider's own monitoring of records about the care of children is not yet good enough.

Children's case records are better organised and are completed to a high standard. The style and clarity of recordings mean that children have an increased understanding about their time living in the home.

Managers facilitate ad-hoc reflective conversations with the team to help staff talk about incidents that have occurred and identify lessons that can be learned. This has included talking about the impact of other staff leaving, the culture of the home, and the routines and boundaries that children need. This allows staff to consolidate their thoughts and feelings and refocus on the children's care.

The manager's consultation process with children, families, professionals and relevant others is not yet embedded. The lack of key stakeholder consultation means that the manager is unable to fully evaluate the service; this may have an impact on the quality of care for children.

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; 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; are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that: ■ risk assessments that are agreed to keep children safe are followed by staff	10 July 2022

■ children receive missing-from-home return interviews on their return home from a missing incident by the child's social worker or an independent person ■ allegations against staff members are managed in line with local safeguarding procedures ■ the risk assessment completed to evaluate whether children are suitable to live together considers the potential impact they may have on one another prior to agreeing a placement.	
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 work as a team where appropriate; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(d)(e)(g)(ii)(h)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that: ■ they regularly seek stakeholder feedback to help improve the quality of care provided to children	10 July 2022

■ they have effective recording and storage systems that allow easy access to records to monitor the quality of care and provide protection for children ■ regular team meetings take place so that multidisciplinary discussions occur to support staff care for the children ■ they have sufficient managers and staffing arrangements so that care is delivered to the children as described in the home's statement of purpose ■ accurate and completed independent visitor reports are submitted to regulator.	
The registered person must— ensure that each permanent appointment of an employee is subject to the satisfactory completion of a period of probation; and the registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (1)(b) (4)(b))	10 July 2022
The registered person must ensure that— 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)(b)(i)(ii)(c)(iv))	10 July 2022
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))	10 July 2022

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: 1249115

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care 4 Children Residential Services Limited

Registered provider address: 1 Stuart Road, Bredbury Park Industrial Estate,
Bredbury, Stockport SK6 2SR

Responsible individual: Karen Brougham

Registered manager: Leighonie Parlour

Inspector

Aaron Mcloughlin, Social Care Inspector

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