

1252120

Registered provider: Paddock House Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private provider. It provides care for up to six children with emotional and social difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2017 and is appropriately qualified.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 December 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: 15 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/03/2022	Full	Good
15/11/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/05/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
12/12/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

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

Children who move into the home experience a planned move that is individual to the child's needs. The home is furnished and decorated to a good standard and children can personalise their bedrooms. This contributes to the homely feel which the staff and the manager create for the children.

Children move on from the home in a planned way. The manager and the staff support the children to develop skills which help the children to live independently. The manager and staff know the children well, and often stay in touch with the children after they have moved out of the home. For some children, this has created a sense of belonging, as they will visit the home after they have moved on. This provides children with an additional support network.

Staff and the manager develop positive relationships with most of the children's family members. While one parent said that they had not received any contact from the staff since their child had moved to live in the home, other family members speak positively of the care provided to their children. This has helped to reduce the risks for children.

Children experience a wide range of activities and holidays. Several professionals commented that these opportunities went 'above and beyond' the activities that are often provided. Professionals feel these opportunities have helped the children to increase their self-confidence and broadened their social skills.

Children make progress with their education. The staff and manager advocate well for children who experience difficulties in accessing education. The staff support the children to attend school, which enables the children to develop and learn.

Children have monthly meetings with the staff to share their views about the home. However, the records of these meetings do not consistently reflect an accurate account of the discussion held, and they are often difficult to read and understand. Issues that are raised by the children are not recorded as being addressed or acted on. This oversight prevents the manager from being assured that the children's wishes and feelings are considered and addressed.

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

Children's safety is not consistently prioritised. Records reflecting who has visited the home are not accurate, as not all visitors sign in. During the inspection, the staff did not know that one visitor was in the home until the visitor presented at the office door. This meant the visitor could have had access to the children in their bedrooms without the staff's knowledge. This leaves the children vulnerable to being harmed.

Complaints and allegations that are made by the children are not clearly listened to, logged or thoroughly investigated. Some children only felt able to complain about one staff member after the staff member had resigned. One child was not supported well when they made complaints against a staff member. The manager acknowledges that the child did not feel sufficiently listened to and that more could have been done to better support the child.

Partnership working is not effective in keeping the children safe. The manager does not consistently inform the children's social workers about the complaints and allegations that the children make. This prevents the social workers from making independent enquiries to ensure that the children are safe. This hinders the safeguarding arrangements for the children. In addition, the manager has failed to notify Ofsted about these events. This prevents Ofsted from being assured that the appropriate safeguarding steps have been taken to safeguard the children.

Physical interventions are rare. On the one occasion that this has been necessary, the record of this incident did not detail the events leading up to the incident, the child's name, or the times and dates of when the staff and the child were spoken to about the incident. This prevents the manager from demonstrating that they have reviewed the incident in a timely manner to address any practice issues.

Children rarely go missing from home. When they do, staff are proactive in securing the children's safe return, as they follow the identified safeguarding procedures.

The manager and staff advocate well for children's wishes. They support the children in having a say about spending time with their families and about accessing employment.

Risk assessments are individual to the needs of each child, and clearly set out the steps that the staff should take to improve the children's safety. Staff know these risk assessments well and understand the risks that are unique to each child. The manager evaluates the needs of each child when considering if it is safe and appropriate for another child to move into the home.

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

The manager is passionate about the children in the home. He spends as much time as he can with the children. These positive relationships have been echoed in the nurturing relationships that the majority of the staff have developed with the children. However, the manager recognises that the time that he has spent with the children has prevented him from completing his management duties, which are required to keep the children safe.

The manager does not have an effective review and monitoring system in place. This has prevented him from identifying, and then addressing, the shortfalls found during this inspection. This oversight prevents the manager from effectively

identifying, actioning, reviewing and evaluating the children's progress and experiences in a timely manner.

The provider has failed to ensure that there is an effective policy in place to manage complaints and allegations. This has prevented the manager from fully investigating complaints and allegations made by children about staff members. The manager has also not alerted other agencies to known safeguarding concerns about one staff member following allegations and complaints made by children. This prevents children from being effectively safeguarded.

The provider does not demonstrate consistent safer recruitment practice. The provider has failed to provide details about a previous employee when a reference request was made. This prevents other employers from practising safer recruitment practice to promote the welfare of children. However, when the manager identifies any potential safeguarding concerns during the recruitment process, he takes appropriate steps to request further information to inform safer recruitment practice. This enables him to be satisfied he is recruiting suitably experienced and safe staff members.

The external scrutiny and monitoring of the home is ineffective at driving improvements forward. The independent visitor has not provided a sufficient evaluation on how well the children are safeguarded and whether the conduct of the home promotes their well-being. The independent visitor has not made any recommendations to assist the manager in improving the care afforded the children.

Staff are sufficiently supported by the manager. Team meetings are regular and are well attended. In stark contrast to the minutes of the children's meetings, the minutes from the team meetings are detailed and the actions are reviewed and followed up. Staff also receive supervision sessions regularly. However, the manager has missed an opportunity to reflect on the staff's practice during these sessions, and is prevented from holding staff to account as these sessions are not accurately recorded.

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— understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; 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)(v)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that any visitors to the home only gain access to the home when they have signed in and been invited into the home by a staff member.	23 December 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, the registered provider must ensure that there is an effective policy in place that outlines how information will be shared about previous employees, with other agencies, when there have been safeguarding concerns.	23 December 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—	6 March 2023

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 staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; 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)(b)(c)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h))	
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which— is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children’s home from abuse or neglect; and sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular—	23 December 2022

provide for liaison and co-operation with any local authority which are, or may be, making a child protection enquiry in relation to a child accommodated in the home; provide for the prompt referral of an allegation about current or ongoing abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the home is located; provide for the prompt referral of an allegation about past abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the alleged abuse or neglect occurred; provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response; describe the measures which may be necessary to protect children following an allegation of abuse or neglect; and describe how and to whom staff are to report, without delay, any concern about abuse or neglect of a child. (Regulation 34 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)) In particular, the registered person must have in place a policy to process allegations made by children against members of staff. The registered person must ensure that the child's placing local authority is informed about any allegations that a child makes about a staff member.	
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. The registered person must ensure that the date and circumstances of any measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child are included in each child's case records. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c) Schedule 3) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all consequences placed on children are recorded as consequences.	23 December 2022

The registered person must also ensure that any records of restraint contain the relevant child's name, and must record the events leading up to any measure of control used.	
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))	23 December 2022
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44 (1) (4)(a)(b)(5))	23 December 2022

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that a record of the staff's supervision session is kept for the staff, including the manager. The record should provide evidence that the staff's supervision session is being delivered in line with regulation 33(4)(b). It is good practice for a note of the content and the outcome of the supervision sessions to be kept and to ensure that both the person giving the supervision and the staff member have a copy of the record. In particular, the registered person should ensure that the staff's supervision sessions are reflective, and that the records of the sessions accurately reflect the discussion held. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraphs 13.2, 13.3 and 13.4)

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: 1252120

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Paddock House Limited

Registered provider address: B3 Kingfisher House, Team Valley, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear NE11 0JQ

Responsible individual: Susan Lincoln

Registered manager: Steven Miller

Inspector

Julia Hagan, Social Care Inspector

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