

1255407

Registered provider: Phoenix Learning & Care Holdings Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private provider and offers care for up to four children. The home states in its statement of purpose that a safe and caring environment is provided for children who have complex social and emotional difficulties. At the time of this inspection, two children were living in the home.

The registered manager has been in post since January 2023.

Inspection date: 15 February 2023

Date of last inspection: 18 August 2022

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The care of children

Children feel well looked after in this home. They said that staff are friendly and play fun games with them. Interactions between staff and children are warm and caring, and staff have adapted their approach to ensure it offers nurture to younger children. Children share positive memories about staff from when they have participated in activities with them, for example, going down slides and playing in ball pits together. Staff support children to do the things they enjoy, including resuming regular swimming lessons. As a result, children are supported to build relationships and have positive experiences with staff.

Children's healthcare and educational needs are being met. The registered manager is pursuing further health assessments to ensure children are receiving tailored care and support. Children attend school, although they are often late in the morning. It is anticipated that the support offered to children before school can be informed by the further assessments of need.

The environment is mostly warm and homely. Children's bedrooms are personalised and there are lots of toys and outside play equipment for younger children. However, some institutionalised features remain in the home and detract from the overall environment. For example, snacks are locked in a storeroom and children must ask staff to unlock the door to gain access. Laminated pictures are stuck to the walls rather than being displayed in picture frames. These features are not in keeping with the overall homely environment or found in a typical family home.

The safety of children

Staff are provided with some of the strategies they need to keep children safe. However, staff do not always use sufficient strategies to avoid the use of restraint. Consequently, there have been 47 incidents involving the use of restraint since the last inspection. Children's plans do not make it clear that restraint should only be used when necessary. As a result, staff are not provided with creative and pragmatic strategies to support the children in a more caring way.

Staff are aware of the individual needs of children and their associated risks. Staff highlight that their communication and relationships with the children are key in the support they offer. Staff are aware of how to respond if children are missing from home, or if there is a concern about staff practice.

Leaders and managers respond effectively to safeguarding concerns. Concerns are shared with the relevant professionals and steps are taken to ensure the immediate

safety of children. Since the last inspection, one concern has appropriately been reported to the local authority designated officer. The internal investigation was concluded on the day of this inspection and outcomes were due to be shared with relevant professionals.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

The registered manager has a sound understanding of the strengths of the home. Staff recognise the improvements that have been made since the last inspection, particularly with regard to how they have adapted to meet the needs of younger children. However, there is a lack of consultation with children about their experiences and the quality of care they are provided with. As a result, the manager is not able to take this into consideration when identifying areas for development. When the independent person visits the home, leaders and managers do not challenge inaccuracies effectively or respond to the recommendations made.

Staff enjoy working in this home. They and the registered manager speak with passion and care about the children they look after. Staff feel well supported by leaders and managers, and work well in the team. Staff are aware of the individual roles they fulfil for each child.

When children move to the home, the registered manager considers how the staff team can meet their individual needs. Staff are provided with training opportunities to ensure they provide effective care. However, the registered manager does not robustly consider the impact of new children moving to the home on the children already living there. The registered manager has reflected on this shortfall and identified actions to ensure similar issues do not arise in the future.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/08/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
07/09/2021	Full	Good
03/02/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
17/09/2019	Full	Good

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 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— 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)) This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that children are consulted about their experiences and the quality of care provided by staff.	17 April 2023
Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing— injury to any person (including the child); and serious damage to the property of any person (including the child). Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b) (2)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that staff seek to avoid the use of restraint whenever it is safe to do so. Specifically, staff should use a range of strategies to help children calm and express themselves safely. These strategies should be reflected in children's plans and it should be clear that restraint is used as a last resort.	17 April 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that, the home maintains a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression throughout. In particular, children should be able to access all shared areas of their home, unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. Children should not need to ask for doors to be unlocked to access additional snacks. Instead, children should be helped to learn about healthy eating and moderation. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1255407

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Phoenix Learning & Care Holdings Limited

Registered provider address: Support Hub, Unit 5, Chinon Court, Lower Moor Way, Tiverton, Devon EX16 6SS

Responsible individual: Rebecca Jones

Registered manager: Abigail Bryant

Inspector

Martin Brown, Social Care Inspector

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