

1257739

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 privately owned home provides care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties.

There is a registered manager in post. She registered with Ofsted in 2018.

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 inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 10 February 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 December 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	inadequate
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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: 9 September 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/09/2019	Full	Good
07/08/2018	Full	Good
20/02/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Not all children have had a positive experience of living in the home and their overall progress and experiences have been compromised by poor safeguarding practice. Children moved out of the home as their welfare was not promoted. The staff team has gradually changed, and a new staff team now supports the children. Observations of children with staff are positive. Throughout the inspection, children responded well to the guidance and support provided by staff.

The three children currently living at the home are happy and settled, and they are making progress from their individual starting points. Children told inspectors that they have good relationships with the current staff team and they feel well cared for and listened to. One child said, 'If the staff had not talked to me and helped me understand my bad choices in life, I would definitely be in prison by now. I am a different person.' Another child said, 'When I was out of the house and rang, [name of staff] said I don't care about what's happened, I care about you, I'm coming to get you. That made me feel ok to come home.'

Transition planning for children needs to be strengthened. Documentation sometimes lacks important information to demonstrate how the compatibility of children is carefully considered. However, children are well supported. One child is due to move into semi-independent accommodation. This is a positive move for him and, although he is apprehensive, staff have completed direct work sessions to support the move. The child welcomed these discussions.

Children's plans are individualised, although plans are lengthy. It is not always clear how the staff will support children to achieve their full potential. For example, therapy completed with children, as part of the organisation's therapeutic programme, is not clearly embedded into children's plans. Therefore, staff do not always know how they can help children in all areas of their lives.

Education is promoted in the home. Children attend education in line with their individual needs. Staff support children to attend school. Staff take children to and from school and they are available for children if they need help throughout the school day. Children have aspirations for the future. They talk about the support they have received to help them to work towards their career choices.

Staff understand the importance of children keeping in touch with their friends and families and support them to do this. For children who live a long distance from their families, staff continue to actively support and encourage regular contact. This ensures that children maintain contact with all important people in their lives.

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

A police investigation was undertaken and staff practice at the home came under scrutiny. Following the outcome of the police investigation, the organisation commissioned an independent investigation. An action plan was developed based on the learning points for the organisation, staff and managers. Safeguarding procedures were reviewed and updated, and training was provided for all staff across the organisation on their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. A new whistle-blowing service was implemented and work mobile phones were purchased for each home.

Children had been harmed due to a lack of professional curiosity from staff. There have been missed opportunities for managers and staff to take a proactive approach to managing risks. On numerous occasions, there had been no professional curiosity from staff about what children were doing and who they were with.

However, since this time, leaders and managers have taken action, including in response to the independent investigation into practice within the home. Leaders and managers implemented strategies to improve safeguarding practice within the organisation. However, these strategies are not fully embedded in the home's day-to-day management.

Children told inspectors that they can talk to staff about any concerns they may have and that they are safe. They know how to complain and have used the procedure successfully. Children report that staff listen to them and take their concerns seriously.

Children's risk assessments and behaviour management plans are in place but not all staff regularly review or read these documents, including new starters. Documentation within the home can be both contradictory and confusing, particularly the expectations of staff when children are reported as missing from home. Staff do not demonstrate that they consistently follow the plans in place.

Measures of control and discipline are not consistently evaluated for effectiveness. Records do not provide sufficient detail of the measure used, nor do they consistently include the child's view. Some discipline measures, such as sanctions and restraints, are not recorded at all. Therefore, they are not compliant with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015.

Despite there being a new staff team that is committed to the children, the outcomes for some of the children have been variable. The manager does not always direct staff to ensure that they are promoting children's welfare and reducing the children's levels of risk. As a result, potential risks have not been well managed to keep children safe. This is when there have been incidents of bullying in the home or when children have returned home under the influence of an unknown substance.

Medication is not consistently recorded or administered in line with children's prescriptions, in particular controlled drugs. This was a requirement at the previous visit and is repeated.

The safe recruitment policy and procedures are enhancing the children's welfare and safety. Consistent safe recruitment practice is ensuring that all staff are rigorously vetted before they start to work at the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Under the current management in the home, a close culture developed which allowed children who previously lived in the home to be exploited. The registered manager lacked professional curiosity when there were significant safeguarding concerns in the home. Staff did not speak out when they identified concerns about the safety and welfare of children and poor safeguarding practices.

Despite the work completed by the organisation, in response to the investigation, the points of learning for managers are not disseminated into practice. The registered manager was unable to articulate insight into the independent report and did not have a clear understanding of failings in practice and all the areas of improvement. While she acknowledges that there were previous serious failings in safeguarding practice and management oversight, she has failed to embed the necessary improvements into her practice.

Leaders and managers have implemented development plans for individual staff to address the issues identified in the investigation. However, not all development plans provide sufficient detail and do not demonstrate that sufficient action has been taken to robustly address all the relevant issues.

The registered manager has been in post since 2018. She is supported by a deputy manager. Staff report that the managers are supportive and readily available to provide advice and guidance. Managers have covered shortfalls in the staff rotas to ensure that children are cared for. However, the registered manager has not recorded her actual hours worked in line with regulation.

Staff report that they attend team meetings and receive training to improve their knowledge and skills. It is reported that staff have received supervision. However, on occasions, records show that staff were not on shift at the time of their recorded supervision sessions. The registered manager reports that supervision can take place by telephone, sometimes in staff's own time. The responsible individual was unaware that this was practice in the home.

There are gaps in the home's monitoring and review systems, and records are not consistently signed or dated by the author of the record. This reduces the true analysis and evaluation of the care provided for children and does not support

managers to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.

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; that the homes' 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)(v)(b)) In particular, ensure that risk assessments are sufficiently detailed and include all known risks to children and clear actions for staff to follow in practice.	4 March 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— understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each	4 March 2022

child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)(h)) This relates to ensuring that the registered manager reviews and evaluates children's plans.	
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 children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure that robust pre-admission risk assessments are completed which address all children's known risks and needs and staff skills to manage children's individual needs.	4 March 2022
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received in the children's home. In particular the registered person must ensure that— medicine which is prescribed for the child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and no other child; and a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(b)(c))	4 March 2022
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out—	

how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and

the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home.

The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it.

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 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 (1)(a)(b) (2) (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	
The registered person must maintain records("case records") for each child which— include 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))	4 March 2022
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. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)) The provider must ensure that rosters demonstrate all hours that all staff have worked, including the registered manager.	4 March 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: 1257739

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care 4 Children Residential Services Limited

Registered provider address: Care 4 Children, 1 Stuart Road, Bredbury Park Industrial Estate, Bredbury, Stockport SK6 2SR

Responsible individual: Samantha Millward

Registered manager: Amy Brooks

Inspectors

Catherine Fargin, Social Care Inspector
Michelle Edge, Regulatory Inspection Manager

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