

1259061

Registered provider: Outbound Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a small private provider. It provides care and support for up to two children who may experience emotional difficulties and display unwanted behaviour.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since December 2022.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 February 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 8 February 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/02/2022	Full	Good
19/12/2019	Full	Good
03/10/2018	Full	Good
23/01/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are happy living in this home. They say that it is better here than in other children's homes where they have lived. They like the home because it is small and like living in a family home. They also report having very positive relationships with the staff who care for them. Positive and respectful relationships were observed between children and staff during the inspection.

Children engage in activities with staff in the home and in the community. They regularly enjoy bicycle rides, playing golf or football. One child also plays rugby for a local team. This will help them to develop friendships in the local community.

Staff work hard to create a homely environment. Overall, children take pride in the home and having their own personal space. Staff support children to develop independence skills, such as budgeting, cooking and cleaning, in preparation for their move on from the home. However, the toilet in one child's en-suite bathroom is badly stained, which does not provide him with the incentive to keep it clean. This also detracts from the welcoming environment created in other parts of the home.

Children move into the home in a planned way. The child most recently admitted had the opportunity to visit the home on several occasions and have an overnight stay. This means that they were able to meet several members of staff, as well as the other child already living in the home, prior to moving in. This helps to reduce children's anxiety about their move. Those who have moved on from the home keep in touch with staff, which demonstrates the significance of the relationships formed while living in the home.

Staff support children with their education. They work hard to find the most suitable option for each child. Children's attendance and attainment significantly improve following their admission to the home. One child is completing an apprenticeship at college and is learning to drive. These positive measures will help to ensure that he moves on from the home with recognised skills and qualifications and an increased chance of gaining employment.

Staff liaise with health professionals to ensure that children's health needs are met. Staff also support children who are anxious to attend appointments when necessary. Medication is stored safely. However, the medication administration sheet was missing for one prescribed medication, which makes it difficult for staff to check possible side effects or contraindications with other medication. In addition, no homely medication is stored in the home, necessitating a visit to the general practitioner (GP) on every occasion that a child is unwell. This does not help children to understand basic skills around when to take homely medication or when to seek medical assistance.

Social work professionals are positive about the support children receive. One social worker said, 'Staff are a pleasure to work with. [Name of the child] is doing really well. The home is great.'

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Staff have a good understanding of children's needs and vulnerabilities. Risk management plans contain pertinent information and strategies for staff to implement to reduce risk. Children's risk-taking behaviours reduce during their time in the home as staff work with them to understand and address the underlying reasons. There have been no missing-from-care episodes since the last inspection.

The positive relationships that staff have with children enable them to de-escalate most challenging situations in an easy and non-confrontational way. Behaviour management plans are clear about issues that may trigger a reaction by the child, as well as the most appropriate way to manage this. Physical intervention is rare but when incidents do occur, post-incident debriefs ensure that there is support for all involved, as well as good-quality evaluation and learning. However, two new staff members have yet to complete formal training to ensure that they have the skills to intervene safely.

Staff focus on the use of incentives to promote positive behaviour, and younger children have a weekly incentive plan. Consequences are used sparingly. However, they are not always restorative in nature and often involve the replacement of broken goods, which results in children receiving minimal pocket money for many weeks.

Staff recruitment processes are largely safe, which prevents unsuitable adults from being allowed to work with children. However, in one recruitment file considered during this inspection, further professional curiosity would have highlighted that a reference had not been sought or verified with the human resources department. This means that essential details of any disciplinary action or concerns could potentially have been missed.

Allegations are managed well. Managers take appropriate and timely action and work in partnership with other safeguarding bodies. The safety and well-being of children are clearly paramount.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There is a suitably qualified and experienced manager in charge of the home. She was the former deputy of the home and is dedicated to the children and understands them well. She demonstrates a commitment to improving outcomes for children.

Staff feel supported and valued. They report that the transition of the new manager was handled well, and they benefit from regular reflective supervision and an annual performance appraisal. Staff receive support to develop their knowledge and skills

and to progress in their career. However, staff have yet to receive bereavement training, which would help to ensure that they are best placed to provide support for children who have lost someone significant to them.

The home's statement of purpose outlines the objectives of the home but does not currently include details regarding the use of door alarms on external doors. Furthermore, the necessary consent from the children's social workers to this practice has yet to be obtained.

Staff meetings take place regularly, and any actions set are monitored and updated on completion. Records of meetings are detailed and demonstrate information-sharing among staff. The manager also utilises these meetings to develop the knowledge and skills of staff by completing quizzes on subjects such as safeguarding. There is a small reward for the staff member who achieves the highest score. This works as an incentive for staff development.

Good-quality internal monitoring reports are prepared by the manager on a six-monthly basis. These clearly demonstrate the progress children are making and identify areas for development. However, during the inspection, several issues were identified which more-frequent auditing would address. This includes errors in financial records relating to children's clothing monies and consequences imposed on children. Furthermore, staff are not dating documents that require a signature, and formal consultation with those involved with the home has been minimal.

The manager champions the progress of children and challenges placing authorities when needed. She will also escalate her concerns when necessary. Staff and managers are highly thought of by other professionals. The home operates in a manner that is responsive to children's needs. Appropriate action has been taken to address the requirements and recommendations raised at the previous inspection.

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 registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it. (Regulation 16 (1) (3)(a)) Specifically, that the use of external door alarms is included in this document.	24 March 2023
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance. (Regulation 24 (1)(b)) Specifically, that written consents to the use of external door alarms are obtained.	24 March 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children live in a homely and domestic environment. Specifically, that action is taken to address the badly stained toilet. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that medicines are administered in line with a medically approved protocol. Regulation 23 requires the registered person to ensure that they make suitable arrangements to manage, administer and dispose of any medication. These are fundamentally the same sorts of arrangements as a good parent would make but are subject to additional safeguards. In addition, ensure that there is easy access to homely remedies which can be administered by staff without the need to consult a GP on every occasion that a child is ill. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)

- The registered person should ensure that any consequences used to address poor behaviour are restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. In some cases, it will be important for children to make reparation in some form to anyone hurt by their behaviour, and the staff in the home should be skilled to support the child to understand this and carry it out. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. Specifically, all staff should receive training in physical intervention and bereavement. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should ensure that good employment practice is maintained, as set out in regulations 31 to 33. They must ensure that the recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: 1259061

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Outbound Care Limited

Registered provider address: Unit 2, Metropolitan Business Park, Preston New Road, Blackpool, Lancashire FY3 9LT

Responsible individual: Paul Cotton

Registered manager: Leigh Luxton

Inspector

Mandy Williams, Social Care Inspector

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