

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 for up to two children who may experience social and emotional difficulties. One child was living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2022.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 September 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 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/02/2023	Full	Good
08/02/2022	Full	Good
19/12/2019	Full	Good
03/10/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home is a calm and welcoming environment and is decorated and maintained to a high standard. Positive and respectful relationships were observed between staff and the child during the inspection. Staff are nurturing in their approach and care for the child with kindness. Staff take time to listen to the child, which supports good progress and emotional well-being. Two children have lived at the home since the last inspection. One has recently moved out to return to live with his family. Both children have made progress in all aspects of their lives since living at the home.

Children are supported to engage with education providers. One child was supported to complete an apprenticeship; another child has increased school attendance to over 95%. Staff engage effectively with education providers to discuss the children's progress. The registered manager has good oversight of the children's academic progress and predicted grades. The manager requested additional learning resources from the school, which staff use to help children in their learning.

Children are encouraged to try new activities, which enhances their self-esteem and supports them to manage new situations. One child enjoys playing golf, table tennis and snooker with staff members. One child recently went on holiday abroad with staff. Staff sent video clips to their family which showed them swimming in the sea and having fun. The child's family appreciated this.

Family time is supported in line with relevant plans and ensures that children can maintain relationships that are important to them. A child's parent spoke about how staff involve him in activities, including playing golf. He said that he has a lot of respect for the staff and described how his child has 'come on leaps and bounds' since living in the home.

Staff work hard to create a homely environment. Staff support children to develop practical living skills, such as cooking, laundry, shopping and managing their money. The child who has recently moved out made a long journey back to the home to say goodbye to staff and the other child. This demonstrates the significance of the relationships formed while living in the home.

Staff offer support and guidance to children. They help them to understand their emotions and to become socially aware. Children are taught positive ways to resolve conflicts. Social work professionals are positive about the support children receive and the way in which staff communicate with them. One social worker said that a child has made 'amazing progress' and said that she can see that the child is 'much more content'.

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

Staff have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities in keeping children safe. They are trained in and have a good knowledge of safeguarding procedures. Staff have a good understanding of children's needs and vulnerabilities. Children's risk-taking behaviours reduce during their time in the home because staff work with them to understand and address the underlying reasons for their behaviour. There have been no missing-from-care episodes since the last inspection.

Risk management plans contain pertinent information and strategies for staff to implement to reduce risk. Risk management plans are regularly updated. However, a date is not always recorded to show when this has happened. Clear dating of documents will ensure that staff know that risk management plans are current.

Communication processes in relation to risk are not as robust as they should be. A child went missing from school premises. This was not recorded as an incident or logged in the staff handover book. The manager did not email staff about the incident at the time and it was not discussed in the next team meeting. It was recorded in the risk assessment; however, staff are only required to read these once a month, unless otherwise instructed. Communication processes need to be enhanced to ensure that all staff are aware of timely risk-relevant information.

Staff have positive relationships with children. Staff are trained in de-escalation techniques, and the interventions are effective in preventing incidents from escalating. There have not been any physical interventions since the last inspection. Behaviour management plans are clear about issues relating to individual children, as well as the most appropriate way to manage these issues and potential behaviour.

Staff focus on the use of incentives to promote positive behaviour. One child was reluctant to go to the dentist. Staff encouraged them to do so through key-work sessions around dental health and the innovative use of incentives. A staff member came into work on his day off to accompany the child because the child specifically wanted him to be present.

Consequences are used sparingly and are restorative in nature. When a child damaged a wall, staff supported them to repair the wall with filler. This turned the incident into a positive opportunity to learn a new skill.

Safe and effective recruitment processes help to safeguard children. New staff members are well informed, and all staff receive regular supervision. Staff understand the safeguarding procedures, including the whistle-blowing policy. They are clear which partner agencies they need to liaise with to ensure that children are kept safe.

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

The manager is experienced and holds a relevant childcare qualification. She has high aspirations for the children in her care and demonstrates a commitment to improving outcomes for children. The manager takes appropriate action and advocates for the children when the need arises. This ensures that the children's views, wishes and feelings are heard. The manager and staff work well with outside professionals to ensure that children receive the right support in areas such as health and education.

There is a stable staff team in place. Children receive consistent care from adults who they know and trust. Staff feel supported and valued. They receive regular reflective supervision and an annual performance appraisal. The manager uses single-subject supervisions to focus on a particular point of practice. Supervisions were held individually with all staff to restate the need for consequences to be restorative and to offer learning and development for the children. Staff are supported to enhance their knowledge and skills and to progress in their career. The deputy manager has recently progressed into that role, through internal promotion.

Regular team meetings take place and staff reflect on recent experiences with children. The manager also utilises these meetings to develop the knowledge and skills of staff by completing quizzes. For example, one quiz focused on how well staff know the children. However, opportunities to discuss and share information about recent significant incidents involving the children are not always taken.

The leadership team cares about the welfare of the staff. After a child suffered a serious accident, the leadership team held a therapeutic team meeting specifically to support staff. In addition, all staff were offered therapy with a counsellor. Those who attended the counselling found it beneficial and were grateful that the leadership team had arranged it.

The home's statement of purpose includes details regarding the use of door alarms on external doors. The consent form for this practice, which is signed by social workers, states that the alarms will be used at night. This is not sufficiently clear and needs to be amended to contain the specific times of operation and obtain the relevant consents.

Internal monitoring is not yet sufficiently effective in highlighting all shortfalls. Some shortfalls in recording and communicating information were found during this inspection, which the manager was not aware of.

The manager notifies Ofsted of significant events which occur at the home. These notifications are sent in without delay. 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, these would benefit from being more evaluative in parts.

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?

Recommendations

- The registered person should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. They should ensure that all risk-relevant information is recorded and communicated to the staff team in a timely way. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure that they obtain written consent to any monitoring or surveillance by the placing authority at the time of placement. They should be clear as to the times that external door alarms will be activated. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.16)

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

Steve James, Social Care Inspector

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