

1264016

Registered provider: Real Life Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home that provides emergency and short-term placements for up to six children. The home provides care for children who are experiencing social and/or emotional difficulties. The maximum period that children stay in the home for is 42 days. In exceptional circumstances, this may be extended.

The home and the manager registered with Ofsted on 7 September 2017.

There were five children living in the home at the time of this inspection. One child was missing from the home for the duration of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 February 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 8 November 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/11/2022	Full	Good
10/02/2022	Full	Good
24/02/2020	Full	Outstanding
29/11/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

All children are in education. For some children, there has been a noticeable improvement in their engagement with education since living in the home. However, for some children, their attendance fluctuates. Leaders work hard to support children's future plans given that this home provides emergency placements. For example, staff plan to accompany one child to sixth-form open evenings across London so that they have a varied range of options. This emphasises to children the importance of education to support their future.

Staff advocate for children with health needs. When children move in and their health needs are not shared beforehand, leaders put in place additional support so children are comfortable and safe. They also put in place training for staff to meet individual needs. Leaders advocate for children to move to homes where specialist support can be offered if needed. This means that children's health needs are advocated for to support them in the longer term.

Staff support children to see their families when possible. When staff have concerns about children's safety, for example when they go missing from the home and stay with their family unsupervised, leaders raise this concern with other professionals. This enables children's networks to consider what support they can offer to children.

Children feel safe in the home and have good relationships with staff and each other. Some children have bonded over cultural similarities, which allows them to feel a sense of belonging in the home. Children feel that staff go above and beyond for them, especially when it comes to the range of activities that are on offer. One child described a member of staff as 'motherly', while another child told the inspector that staff genuinely care. Despite the short time that children live in this home, children feel that staff take an interest in their aspirations and support them.

Children who have left the home are welcomed back to visit. This further highlights the positive relationships that staff build with children.

Children feel that their views are heard, and staff take account of their feelings. For example, children meet with staff regularly and lead parts of these meetings. Issues such as social media use and the importance of education are discussed as a group. Staff also complete key-work sessions with children, which are adapted to take good account of children's lived experience and learning styles. For example, staff use visual aids with some children. These approaches mean that children are fully able to participate in their own development.

Despite positive relationships with other agencies, not all relevant information is gained about children. For example, staff have not received the education plans for one child who has been in the home for some time. In addition, one child is frequently missing from the home. There are early discussions about whether the

home is suitable for their needs. These discussions have not been taken forward quickly, and the child continues to be at risk.

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

Staff respond well when children are missing from the home. They try to stay in touch with children and use incentives, such as meals out, to try to encourage children to return. This is also an opportunity for staff to talk with children about why they go missing from the home. Staff and managers keep children's networks informed when children are missing from the home. When local authorities do not consistently complete return home interviews with children, staff escalate this as a concern to those placing authorities. Leaders and staff appreciate the importance of understanding the reasons children are missing so they can work with children to reduce this behaviour. For most children, this is successful.

Staff cultivate a culture of respect in the home. As a result, there are very few incidents in the home. Senior leaders feel that most of the children understand and respect the home's rules, which helps children to feel settled.

Staff and managers use consequences proportionately. Managers maintain good oversight of any consequence to ensure that the measure helps children to understand why it was necessary. As a result, children understand and learn from their behaviour, and it is not repeated.

Staff understand children's risks well. Children's risk assessments are kept up to date and give staff information about how to intervene with children if necessary to reduce presenting risks. External professionals have faith in staff's understanding of the risks that children face and their efforts to keep them safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Staff ensure that the home environment is clean, well decorated and personalised to the children who stay there. When children have additional needs that mean they need an increased cleaning regime in their bedroom, leaders ensure that this is put in place so that the child's health needs can be well met. For one child, some needs were not shared with managers before they arrived, so leaders have quickly put in place measures to ensure that their personal environment remains clean and suitable. This shows children how leaders will support them and prioritise their needs.

Managers know the home well and feel supported by staff and senior leaders. Managers work well with other agencies as needed, and this is a strength of the approach of the home. Managers understand that this is necessary to ensure that children have the support they need. However, staff also develop their own skills and understanding of specialist interventions. For example, staff complete gang intervention work, which is recognised as a strength by other professionals.

Staff are well supported by leaders and managers. They enjoy working in the home and seeing children make progress. Staff appreciate the training they complete, including the learning opportunities in staff meetings, which helps them to better support children. Staff reflect on children's experiences and understand that relationships need to be built gradually so children are not overwhelmed. Managers provide regular supervision to staff, which helps them to develop their approach with children. In addition, staff have regular appraisals and incorporate feedback from children so they can understand the impact of their work.

External agencies are highly complimentary about the work that staff complete with children. The high number of children who come to the home means that staff are constantly learning and building new relationships. They also quickly understand risks to children and put in place effective risk management approaches. One professional told inspectors that the child they work with is 'thriving' in the care of the home.

Due to the nature of the home, staff are flexible to ensure that there are enough adults on duty to support children. This means that children have reliable staff caring for them and guiding them while they stay in the home.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should have a key role in seeking to develop the home's effective working relationships with each child's placing authority and with other relevant persons, which may include services, individuals (including parents), agencies, organisations and establishments that work with children in the local community, such as the police, schools, health and youth offending teams. These working relationships will also be key to success in delivering the care planning standard. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.3)
- The registered person should ensure that the independent person makes a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. This recommendation was raised at the last inspection and is restated. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

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: 1264016

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care 2 Share Ltd

Registered provider address: 46 The Ridgeway, North Harrow, Harrow HA2 7QN

Responsible individual: Mehnaaz Chaudhary

Registered manager: Andrea Adolph

Inspector

Chelsea Agyeman, Social Care Inspector

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