

# 1268518

Registered provider: South West Childcare Services

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This children's home was registered in November 2017 to provide care and accommodation for two children. The home is operated by a small private company that has other children's homes in the same region.

**Inspection dates:** 23 to 24 April 2018

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| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>requires improvement to be good</b> |
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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 | requires improvement to be good |
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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:** Not applicable

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Not applicable

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** Not applicable

## **Recent inspection history**

**This is the home's first 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   |
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| <p>5: Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met</p> <p>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs.</p> <p>In particular, this is in relation to arrangements being in place for children who go missing to have an independent return home interview on their return.</p> <p>(Regulation 5 (a)(b))</p>                                                                                               | 30/04/2018 |
| <p>6: The quality and purpose of care standard</p> <p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose.</p> <p>In particular, this is in relation to the use of sanctions which</p> | 14/05/2018 |

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| <p>should be meaningful and restorative in nature and reflect the home's philosophy of 'normalisation'.</p> <p>(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                   |
| <p>13: The leadership and management standard<br/>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child.</p> <p>In particular, this is in relation to the staffing structure being improved to provide senior, qualified and experienced staff to lead shifts and support the manager.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(c)(d) and (e))</p> | <p>31/05/2018</p> |
| <p>13: The leadership and management standard<br/>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>14/05/2018</p> |

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| <p>In particular, this is in relation to the manager's oversight of records maintained by the home, including missing from care, physical restraints, sanctions and children's finances. The manager must review records and the practices they describe in order to identify whether improvements can be made and also to ensure that records are fit for purpose.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) and (2)(h))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                   |
| <p>27: Appointment of manager<br/>The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if—</p> <p>there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and</p> <p>the registered provider—</p> <p>is an organisation or a partnership;</p> <p>does not satisfy regulation 28; or</p> <p>is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home.</p> <p>If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of—</p> <p>the name of the person so appointed; and</p> <p>the date on which the appointment takes effect.</p> <p>In particular, the appointed manager must submit their application by the agreed date to ensure that Ofsted can conduct a suitability interview within 26 weeks of the previous registered manager leaving their position.</p> <p>(Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii) and (2)(a)(b))</p> | <p>30/04/2018</p> |
| <p>33: Employment of staff<br/>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>undertake appropriate continuing professional development;</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience.</p> <p>(Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p>31/05/2018</p> |

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| <p>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm.</p> <p>In particular, this refers to the importance of storing medication safely, and any decisions about the safety of administering medication should be carefully risk assessed following specialist advice.</p> <p>Regulation 12 (1)(2)(b))</p> | <p>30/4/2018</p> |
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## Inspection judgements

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

The overall experiences and progress of children living in this home require improvement. Care practices need to be consistently good, as lapses in standards have put children at risk of harm, for example in relation to the management of their medication. In addition, opportunities have been missed to help children to become increasingly safe, as correct procedures have not been followed to ensure that children who have been missing have the opportunity to talk to someone independent of the home.

Staffing arrangements have not been robust. Changes in the management of the home and the need to use company bank staff to offset shortages have meant that children have been cared for by several different adults. For children moving into a new children’s home, this will have been disconcerting at times.

Notwithstanding the above, children are settling into their new home and starting to make progress. They are developing good relationships with staff. From their individual starting points, both children have achieved progress in education. Staff are understanding of the challenges some children face within a school setting and are offering sensitive and nurturing support. Where difficulties arise, they seek to advocate for children and liaise with other professionals to seek a suitable resolution.

Staff have been effective in helping children to see their families regularly, and one parent described how she is being supported to build a more ‘positive relationship’ with

her child, which she is very appreciative of. Children are also supported to pursue hobbies and enjoy a range of activities, such as horse riding and dog walking.

Children are being encouraged to be reflective and to think positively about their achievements, and this is helping to build their emotional resilience. The manager and staff have access to clinical support and are striving to care for children in a way that recognises their childhood experiences.

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

The management and safekeeping of children's medication have not been consistently good. A serious incident occurred when a child was able to easily access medication that should have been locked in a suitable cabinet. This put the child at serious risk of harm. Since then, improved medication storage facilities have been provided and staff are more vigilant.

On a separate occasion, a child was given prescribed sleeping tablets following an incident when there was a possibility that the child had taken an overdose of paracetamol. The inspector was told that advice about this was taken from paramedics who attended, but the home's record does not indicate this, nor is there a separate risk assessment or rationale in place to explain this action.

On too many occasions, children do not receive an independent return home interview after going missing from the home. Out of eight occasions, only once did the child have the opportunity to meet with an independent person. This demonstrates that opportunities are being lost to ascertain the reasons why a child is going missing from the home and what can be done to help reduce incidents in the future. It is imperative that current arrangements in place are reviewed and improved as a matter of urgency.

When a child's behaviour is deemed unacceptable, sanctions are sometimes used. Not all of the sanctions used have been fully recorded. Some of the sanctions used are punitive and inappropriate. For example, a child is expected to pay for the replacement of mugs they broke while distressed, following a difficult conversation with a parent. This approach is not in keeping with practices outlined in the home's statement of purpose and should be reviewed.

A social worker told the inspector that the behaviour of the child she has placed in this home has 'improved immensely' and, while there is still much to achieve, she feels that the staff are being very supportive and working well with her, the child and the child's family.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

Since being registered five months ago, this children's home has had inconsistent management arrangements in place. The original manager was registered by Ofsted but left soon after registration. For two months, the home then had an interim manager from another of the company's homes, who shared her time across both children's homes. From late January, a new manager has been in place. She is due to submit an application for registration to Ofsted. These inconsistent management arrangements have been an unsatisfactory start to this new home, and the impact is evident through practices and records that require improving.

The current manager has previously been a registered manager, has suitable experience and is a qualified social worker. She is committed to making improvements and securing good outcomes for children in her care. She has established a good relationship with both children and is reflective and considered in her practice.

The staffing arrangements require improvement. There are no senior staff to support the manager, and the majority of staff are relatively inexperienced, with just one of six staff members having achieved a level 3 diploma in residential childcare. Due to sickness, bank staff from within the company have been used regularly, and, although children have got to know these adults, these arrangements do not provide a good level of consistency which children need to form positive relationships.

The rationale for reducing night-time staffing from two staff sleeping overnight at the home to one requires reviewing and formalising in the light of children's needs.

Staff have received induction training. However, many require additional training in areas that include safeguarding, child sexual exploitation and abuse, self-harm and autistic spectrum disorder.

Supervision arrangements require improvement. There are no records of supervision prior to late January and, since then, staff have not received supervision as regularly as required.

The quality of recording key incidents requires improvement, as does the robustness of the manager's oversight of the practices they describe. For example, missing from home records are not of a consistently good standard. They do not detail the child's safe return and follow-up actions. Records relating to children's monies managed by the home are inadequate and incomplete. They do not provide a clear audit trail of how money is being used or an account of money used as reparation. Sanction and physical restraint records are signed off but do not include the manager's review, which should detail whether practices are good and effective and, if not, what staff need to consider in the future that will improve practices and benefit children.

Children's care plans are of a good standard. They clearly set out the objectives of the placement and progress being made.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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:** 1268518

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** South West Childcare Services

**Registered provider address:** 46 Durnford Street, First Floor Flat, Plymouth, Devon PL1 3QN

**Responsible individual:** Angela Glynn

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Norma Welsby, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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