

1270301

Registered provider: Future Focused Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned. The provider states in its statement of purpose that it provides care for up to three children who may have emotional or behavioural difficulties (social and emotional difficulties).

The manager is not registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 October 2022

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	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: 5 October 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/10/2021	Full	Good
15/10/2019	Full	Good
14/03/2019	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
12/06/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Children living in the home are settled and happy. They say they like living here and want to stay here if it is not possible to return to their families. One family member said, '[Name of home] is the best place [name of child] has ever been. He is like a different child now.' Staff support children to develop positive relationships with each other, and children get on well. As a result, children make progress in many areas.

Staff spend time with children when they are new to the home and work hard to get to know them. This helps children to settle into the home quickly and develop positive relationships with the staff. Children already living in the home are involved in decision-making processes to help new children moving in, and staff listen to their wishes. However, the bedroom for one child new to the home does not feel homely or welcoming.

Staff support children to engage in new hobbies and activities. Children enjoy activities such as swimming, baking and trampolining. Children have also been on holiday to Cornwall. At the time of the inspection, staff and children were planning activities to celebrate Halloween.

Staff support children to engage with full-time education. Staff work hard to identify education placements that meet children's specific needs. One child had not been in education prior to moving into the home. Since living in the home, he has accessed a placement which is appropriate for his needs and he is thriving. He attends full time, receives positive school reports and regularly receives weekly awards for his behaviour and engagement. For new children in the home, staff are proactive in organising tutors to visit the home until formal placements are identified. Staff recognise when education placements do not meet children's needs. They advocate on behalf of children to ensure that they receive the additional support they require.

Staff respect children's relationships with the people who are important to them. Children are supported to spend time with their family and previous carers. Staff work hard to develop positive relationships with children's families. Families are kept informed of children's progress and well-being. However, records for a child who had not lived at the home very long do not detail the authorised arrangements. Staff took the child to see their family without having the correct understanding of safe arrangements.

Children living in the home feel listened to. Weekly children's meetings provide children with the opportunity to express their views and requests. A social work professional said, 'All staff are very child centred. [Name of child] feels listened to and part of the decision-making. Best interests are always considered.'

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

Staff know the children well. They understand their risks and specific needs. Staff work hard to understand the children's histories and backgrounds. This supports them to understand their behaviours and difficulties. Risk assessment documents are detailed. They include clear guidance and strategies for staff to follow.

As a result of the positive relationships with children, staff can de-escalate most incidents of challenging behaviour. Incidents of physically holding children are rare. When incidents do occur, staff manage these well. Debriefs are undertaken with children to reflect on the incidents and ensure their well-being. However, children's records do not include evaluation from the manager. This means that incidents are not reviewed, and strategies used are not measured for their effectiveness. This was also found at a previous inspection.

For the children currently living in the home, incidents of going missing from care are rare. When incidents do occur, staff actively look for children and manage the incidents well. Children are welcomed back home. Follow-up work is undertaken with children to educate them on the dangers and risks of going missing from care. However, children's records do not include clear strategies or guidance for staff to follow if children do go missing from care.

Staff promote positive behaviour at all times. Individualised incentives are in place for children to earn extra money or additional time on their devices at weekends. A child who recently moved in said that his favourite thing about the home so far is the incentives that are in place because they are helping him to behave.

Staff and children have access to an in-house therapist who visits the home on a weekly basis. Consultations with the therapist support staff to understand children's individual therapeutic needs and adapt their practice when strategies with children are deemed ineffective. Children have one-to-one time with the therapist, who supports them on specific areas of need.

The recruitment practices for new staff to the home are not robust. This requirement is carried over from the previous inspection. Information for new staff was not clear in the records; however, this was rectified during the inspection. Potential gaps in employment have not been explored and references do not include sufficient information. Furthermore, photographic identification is not on file for one new member of staff. Staff recruitment is managed externally to the home and the manager does not have sufficient oversight of the recruitment process. This limits the manager's ability to ensure that the staff working in the home are suitable.

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

The manager is new to the role and is not registered with Ofsted, having stepped up from the deputy manager position. He is supported by a relatively stable and

established staff team. He is passionate about implementing changes in the home to ensure that children receive good-quality care at all times.

Staff say that they feel supported by the new manager. They say that they are optimistic that standards will improve in the home. Staff say that they are receptive to the proposed changes made by the manager to improve how they care for the children. Staff have received supervision since the new manager has been in post. However, supervision has not taken place on a regular basis and is not conducted for the duration of time stated in the statement of purpose. Supervision sessions are brief and are not child focused.

New staff are provided with opportunities to complete core training. However, established staff have not completed refresher training. This requirement is carried over from the previous inspection. Additionally, staff have not completed training which is specific to the children's needs. This means that staff may not have the skills required to fully support children in certain aspects of their care.

The manager recognises when children are not settled in the home and when the safety and well-being of the other children in the home are compromised if the staff are unable to meet their needs. Action is taken with social work professionals to find alternative placements that are more suited to children's needs. Additional staffing is implemented to care for children when they cannot return to the home.

The manager has developed positive relationships with other professionals involved in the children's care. Staff have worked hard to develop positive relationships with children's families when there have been difficulties to engage with them previously. Social work professionals say that communication is excellent and that there is great multi-agency working.

The manager has high aspirations for children. He recognises weaknesses in practice and can identify areas for improvement. However, internal monitoring and reviewing systems do not demonstrate this. There is a lack of evaluation and targets to improve the quality of care provided to children.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 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; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(b)) Specifically, ensure that children's records include missing-from-care protocols.	17 November 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— 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; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;	17 November 2022

understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff complete training that is specific to the children’s needs. Staff must have access to regular and meaningful supervision, and the registered person must use monitoring and reviewing systems to improve the quality of care provided to children.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and that each child’s relevant plans are followed; that, subject to regulation 22 (contact and access to communications), contact between each child and the child’s parents, relatives and friends, is promoted in accordance with the child’s relevant plans. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(c)(d)) Specifically, ensure that contact arrangements for children new to the home are in place and in accordance with local authority care plans.	17 November 2022
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children’s home; if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).	17 November 2022

The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a) (3)(d)) Specifically, ensure that staff recruitment processes comply with the principles of safer recruitment. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)) Specifically, ensure that staff attend refresher training. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	17 November 2022
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 effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(vii)) Specifically, ensure that records include the manager's evaluation of the incident. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	17 November 2022

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children. Children's homes will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Specifically, for new children moving into the home, their bedrooms should be decorated and furnished to create a homely feel. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: 1270301

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Future Focused Limited

Registered provider address: Crows Nest Business Park, Ashton Road, Wigan, Lancashire WN5 7XX

Responsible individual: Neil Smith

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Claire Hobbs, Social Care Inspector

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