

1271979

Registered provider: 4d Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and provides care for up to three children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, two children were living at the home.

A linked provision offers education on a separate site. The inspector only inspected the social care provision.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 1 November 2023 and holds a relevant management qualification.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 March 2025

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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 16 January 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/01/2024	Full	Good
30/01/2023	Full	Good
14/12/2021	Full	Good
13/01/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, two children have moved out of the home, and one child has moved in. Both children living at the home at the time of this inspection were seen and spoken to by the inspector.

Staff help children to move out of the home in a planned way. After five years in the home, one young person, who was 18 at the time, moved on to supported living. This young person's social worker was extremely positive about the support they received while moving out. Staff continue to stay in touch with the young person. The social worker said staff went 'above and beyond' to help the young person. Another child had an unplanned ending because staff could no longer keep them safe. Despite these risks, the manager and staff supported the child's move out of the home to another setting. They supported a positive ending and took the child on a caravan holiday to make happy memories. Despite difficult circumstances, staff support children at times of change.

Children have bespoke education packages to meet their needs. These include a combination of extra-curricular activities in the community and home tutoring. The manager and staff are committed to ensuring that children receive education at a pace that meets their emotional and developmental needs. The school staff have good working relationships with staff to support children in school when they are emotionally ready. This support helps children who otherwise would not be accessing education.

Staff provide good support for children's health needs. One child has needed additional support to achieve a healthy lifestyle. The staff have helped the child explore nutrition and exercise, improving their health. The child recognises their progress and the difference in their health and well-being.

Children take part in various activities outside the home. They attend football clubs, Army cadets, archery and cycling events. Last summer, children reared chicks and cared for several chickens in the garden. One child has a passion for off-road motorcycle racing. Staff encourage the child to regularly enjoy this hobby. Staff celebrate his achievements at race events. As part of a school exchange, the children have had the opportunity to travel abroad and raise money for charity.

Children's photos are displayed around the home to showcase their achievements and interests. Children's bedrooms are personalised according to their tastes. However, some rooms lack cleanliness, and repair work is delayed. There is a large outdoor space with play equipment. Some debris has been left outside the home, which may pose a risk to children.

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

Children have positive relationships with staff, who know them well. Children enjoy spending time with staff. The staff have helped children to understand their feelings and change some of the choices they make. A child said, 'I have changed my behaviour a lot now; I am a whole different kid.' They went on to say, 'I like this home very much; it's like a family to me.'

Staff understand the risks the internet may pose to children. They speak to children about how they communicate online and offer suitable advice and guidance. Leaders and managers use appropriate systems to track and monitor how children access the internet to help keep them safe. In addition, staff carry out regular checks of children's devices.

Staff track children's progress over time using the home's specific monitoring tool. This sets out what staff hope children can achieve and how they can meet these targets through achievable steps. Children's progress is reviewed by staff with an external child psychologist who visits the home monthly to explore how staff can continue to help children to thrive.

Staff assist children in exploring various strategies for managing their feelings. This allows children to respond differently to some of their challenging emotions. Staff have used physical restraint for one child. The records are not always detailed about what happened and when staff or the child were spoken with. On two occasions, the manager was involved in these holds, and there was no independent oversight to review practice. This does not help leaders and managers to understand what they could do differently in the future.

Staff have good relationships with children. Children receive praise for their behaviour, and they take pride in their progress and achievements. Children rarely receive consequences. On some occasions, children receive consequences for their behaviour, such as losing pocket money. However, there is no record of these consequences. This prevents the manager from reviewing progress over time or determining whether staff responses are appropriate.

Children rarely go missing from the home. However, one child has gone missing from the home on several occasions. When children go missing, staff look for them, speak to the police, and support them so they can return home safely. Although staff take steps to help children when they go missing, some records of children missing from home lack detail and management oversight. Furthermore, the manager has failed to adequately verify whether the child was offered return home interviews and if any lessons were learned from these visits. This limits the manager's ability to understand why the child went missing.

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

Since the last inspection, leaders and managers' monitoring systems have not always been successful in assisting them to understand and monitor children's progress. While

some records are detailed, others are not. Leaders and managers do not always review records about children in a timely manner. The manager does not consistently comment on issues of concern for children. This does not allow the manager or staff to learn from events or understand patterns and trends in children's behaviour. In addition, some records use language that could be institutionalised, which not helpful to children.

On one occasion, a child made an allegation about a member of staff. However, staff, leaders or managers did not record this allegation. Information was shared with the child's social worker, but not the local authority designated officer (LADO). Staff were managing challenging situations for the child at the time. This lack of recording hinders managers from reviewing safeguarding concerns effectively or understanding the rationale behind decisions.

All staff have attained a relevant qualification within the required time frame. Leaders and managers have a current training plan, which lists potential training for staff since the last inspection. A staff member spoke positively about the training they have received. However, the training plan does not track individual training and when it was undertaken. This makes it difficult for leaders and managers to track staff training needs effectively.

Each month, leaders and managers arrange for an independent person to visit the home. The manager does not yet fully understand what would be most useful from these visits to support learning and development, which limits his ability to make changes.

Staff feel well supported by the manager. The manager listens and is available to offer help when needed. All staff have supervision sessions with the manager during which they discuss children and any safeguarding concerns. However, the manager does not have an effective system in place to track staff's supervision sessions over time to ensure that they are receiving support at regular intervals in accordance with the home's statement of purpose.

Staff said the support they receive from leaders and managers has encouraged them to continue working at the home. Since the last inspection, only one member of staff has left the home. Most staff have worked at the home for two or more years; several have over five years' experience at the home. The stability of the staff team helps provide continuity of care for children.

Parents and professionals speak positively about the home, the children's experiences at the home, and their relationships with staff. They praised the communication from the manager and commented on the quality of relationship-building with families. The manager has also communicated with local agencies, such as the police, who have visited children at the home as part of community outreach.

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, The 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 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— understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; 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)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)) In particular, ensure that allegations are recorded, children's risk management plans are recorded as agreed by the local authority, and, in the case of allegations, there is consultation with the LADO.	31 March 2025
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—	30 June 2025

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;

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;

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.
(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(f)(h))

In particular, ensure that: staff keep up-to-date and accurate records for children; there is clear and consistent oversight and monitoring of records; and the manager's reviews and observations are recorded.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that there is an evaluation of missing-from-home incidents to identify any gaps in training, skills or knowledge for staff or to record and retain evidence of what worked well. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.31)
- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. The registered person should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child and monitor and review the information provided by these interviews. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should ensure that records of restraint are maintained to enable them and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint practices, identify effective practice, and promptly address any issues or emerging trends of concern. The review should provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure that it meets the needs of each child. In particular, ensure that an appropriate individual is designated to carry out debriefs with staff and children when the manager has been involved in an incident of restraint. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)
- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets children's needs. In particular, ensure that repair work is carried out without delay and that the home is deep cleaned as necessary. ('Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

- The registered person should ensure that staff record information about individual children in a non-stigmatising way. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that any consequences used to address poor behaviour are recorded. Children should be supported in understanding how their behaviour can affect themselves, other children, the staff who care for them, and the wider community. Equally, staff should use a system for recording and celebrating positive behaviour and recognising when children have managed situations well. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)

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: 1271979

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: 4d Care Limited

Registered provider address: 8a New Road, Mepal, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB6 2AP

Responsible individual: Kevin Ward

Registered manager: Russell Brimming

Inspector

Rebecca Hannell, Social Care Inspector

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