

1271998

Registered provider: Care 4 Children Residential Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned by a private organisation.

The provider states in their statement of purpose that they provide care for children with EBD (social and emotional difficulties).

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on our website.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 October 2021

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 15 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/10/2019	Full	Good
17/10/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Since the last inspection, six children have moved out of the home and three children have moved in. Not all children have had a positive experience of living in the home, and some children's placements have ended in crisis. Furthermore, the overall experiences and progress of children are compromised by poor safeguarding practice.

Education plans in the home lack information about the educational needs of each child. Managers have not ensured that children with special educational needs have a copy of their education, health and care plan readily available to staff.

When children do not have a school placement or do not attend school, staff do not encourage them to engage in educational activity throughout the day. For example, inspectors observed children playing on their computer consoles, accessing online games and using their mobile phones throughout the day. This is concerning as children's plans state that children must not have access to these provisions when they do not take part in education. This lack of interest in children's involvement in education and welfare fails to value children, does not teach them about consequences and does not make them feel cared for.

Children are not supported by all staff to learn acceptable behaviours. For example, inappropriate language, bullying and smoking in the home is left unchallenged. This does not support children to learn how to treat others with respect and to develop socially aware behaviour.

The statement of purpose for the home states that children live in a therapeutic environment and receive support using a three-phase recovery programme called 'Wellbeing for Life'. However, managers and staff do not understand the programme, and there was no evidence of the children being supported to achieve the three stages of the programme. Furthermore, there was no evidence of children receiving therapy, education or being supported in a therapeutic environment.

Children do not take part in or benefit from activities that meet their needs or develop their cultural, physical, and social interests and skills. This is despite children having moved into the home with a range of hobbies and interests that have not subsequently been promoted or safely explored by staff.

Despite the shortfalls, a strength of the home is the support that staff provide to children to spend quality time with their friends and family. Staff work positively with parents to promote meaningful and safe contact, where appropriate. Furthermore, throughout the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, periods of isolation were managed well, and children were helped to understand the pandemic and actions that they could take to protect themselves.

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

Managers and staff do not understand their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children and do not take effective action when there is a concern about children's welfare and safety. For example, when two children were out in the community, they contacted staff because they had been threatened by an individual with a knife and one child had suffered a physical assault. Despite children saying they were 'afraid' and asking staff to help them, immediate action was not taken to protect all involved. The police and the children's social workers were not notified of the incident, and direct work was not completed with children afterwards to help them understand how to stay safe in the community. Consequently, children are not appropriately safeguarded by the adults who are caring for them.

Managers fail to report allegations and disclosures made by children to all safeguarding professionals. For example, during an intervention, a child alleged that they had suffered physical harm, and, in another incident, a child alleged that a staff member had use inappropriate language. These incidents were not reported and recorded in line with the home's safeguarding procedures. Managers fail to investigate poor safeguarding practices effectively or take sufficient action to protect children while investigations take place.

Managers do not always share accurate information with external professionals. Safeguarding notifications do not match with information recorded in the home. Allegations shared with the designated officer were inaccurate and were missing information. Therefore, professionals make decisions without being aware of important detail. As a result, some of these decisions may not always be in children's best interests.

Managers have agreed placements for children without understanding each child's needs. They have also not identified the strategies required to keep the children safe or considered the subsequent impact on the children already living in the home. Consequently, children's risk-taking behaviour has escalated, and children have suffered harm while out in the community.

There is an inconsistent response to behaviour management in the home. Behaviour management plans lack guidance for staff to follow. As a result, incidents are poorly managed by staff, and there is no clear recording of sanctions and rewards that have been used. Restraint is not used in accordance with the legislative framework to protect the child and those around them. Incidents are not reviewed, recorded or monitored, and the views of the child are not sought. Managers who have been involved in restraints have signed these off as acceptable practice with no independent oversight.

Children's risk assessments are not up to date and do not all include clear plans for staff to follow to reduce the risk of harm. In addition, risk management plans do not include appropriate strategies for staff to follow to keep children safe. For example, staff are required to monitor the use of the internet and mobile phones by children.

Despite strategies being in place, staff have failed to follow them, and checks are not completed on children's use of mobile phones or the internet. This has meant that children have been left at risk of harm.

Managers were unable to demonstrate that during the recruitment process, full and satisfactory information is obtained for staff prior to employment in the home. This means that children are cared for by staff who have not been suitably vetted.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There was no registered manager in place at the time of this inspection. The registered manager left in June 2021. The management arrangements that have been put in place in the absence of a registered manager have not ensured that there is effective leadership and management of the home.

The management team is not leading and managing the home in a manner that is consistent with the aims outlined in the statement of purpose. There is no evidence of children receiving therapy, education or being supported in a therapeutic environment.

Recording in children's plans and documents is poor. Some risk assessments and behaviour management plans for children fail to provide the staff team with appropriate strategies to manage children's behaviour or minimise risk. When plans do contain effective strategies, staff fail to follow them.

Staff do not have regular supervision as set out in the home's statement of purpose. This means that staff do not have opportunities to reflect on children's progress or their own learning and development. Furthermore, not all staff have had training to ensure that they can safely care for children. For example, not all staff have attended training in safeguarding, self-harm and alcohol and substance misuse.

Staffing arrangements remain unclear and there is an over-reliance on staff from other homes working in this home. Staff who are covering shifts are not provided with opportunities to understand the needs of the children or the risks that they may face before starting to care for them. In addition, rotas provided by the manager do not provide an accurate record of the staff working in the home. This is not safe and accountable practice for staff or children.

Significant events involving children living at the home have not been reported to Ofsted. A failure to share information with all relevant people compromises the safety and welfare of children. Without appropriate notification, Ofsted is unable to carry out its monitoring function to ensure that appropriate action is taken to safeguard children.

Social workers report that communication with managers and staff in the home is variable. They report that they had noticed a decline in communication over the last few months. Social workers said that they do not receive weekly updates or notification of serious incidents involving their child. This hinders the care planning

process and does not ensure that all key professionals are kept up to date and fully aware of new risks or areas of concern for children.

Following the inspection, five compliance notices were issued.

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
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— develop positive relationships with them; engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— help each child to express views, wishes and feelings. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(ii))	5 December 2021
*The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment;	14 November 2021

promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans; The provider needs to make sure education plans are followed and are up to date. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)(v)(viii)(x))	
*The enjoyment and achievement standard is that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— develop the child's interests and hobbies; participate in activities that the child enjoys and which meet and expand the child's interests and preferences; make a positive contribution to the home and the wider community; and that each child has access to a range of activities that enable the child to pursue the child's interests and hobbies. (Regulation 9 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))	14 November 2021
*The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles.	14 November 2021

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(c))	
*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; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(vi)(vii))	14 November 2021
*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;	14 November 2021

ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; 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)(d)(h))	
*The care planning standard is that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c))	14 November 2021
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; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). 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)(b)(3)(d))	5 December 2021
The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. The registered person must ensure that all employees—	5 December 2021

receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33(1)(a) (4)(b))	
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ('the behaviour management policy') which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (2))	5 December 2021
The registered person must maintain records ('case records') for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))	5 December 2021
The registered person must maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)) The provider needs to demonstrate all hours that all staff have worked on rotas, including managers.	5 December 2021
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)(e))	5 December 2021

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: 1271998

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care 4 Children Residential Services Limited

Registered provider address: Care 4 Children, 1 Stuart Road, Bredbury Park Industrial Estate, Bredbury, Stockport SK6 2SR

Responsible individual: Lisa Baxter

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Jessica Higginson, Social Care Inspector

Michelle Edge, Social Care Inspection Manager

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