

1274341

Registered provider: Park Blue Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned and managed by a private organisation. It provides care and accommodation for up to three children and young people. Soon after registration in April 2018, the registered manager post became vacant. The new manager was approved as suitable in December 2018.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 December 2018

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: This is the first inspection since the home was registered in April 2018.

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

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
8: The education standard 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 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. (Regulation 8 (1)(2)(a)(vii))	01/01/2019
11: The positive relationships standard The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on - mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child's	06/12/2018

behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(iv)(v) and (xi)) In particular, ensure that staff are trained in the use of physical intervention before they may need to restrain children.	
12: The protection of children standard 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— are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(vii))	01/01/2019
13: The leadership and management standard 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; 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	31/01/2019

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)(f)(g)(i)(ii) and (h))	
20: Restraint and deprivation of liberty Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20 (2))	06/12/2018
35: Behaviour management policies and records 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. 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 name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;	06/12/2018

within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b)(2)(3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii) and (c)) In particular, ensure that all physical intervention is recorded as a restraint. In addition, review the use of consequences to ensure that they are meaningful and restorative.	
37: Other records Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; ensure that the records are kept up to date; and retain the records for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry. (Regulation 37 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c)) In particular, accurately maintain the register of children.	06/12/2018

Recommendations

- Regulation 23 requires the registered person to ensure that they make suitable arrangements to manage, administer and dispose of any medication. These are fundamentally the same sorts of arrangements as a good parent would make but are subject to additional safeguards. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)
In particular, ensure that there is a record of the signatures of all staff members who administer medication.
- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food, hygiene etc.); however in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression.

(‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.9)

In particular, review the practice of displaying information leaflets and posters on the walls of the home. In addition, replace padlocks with discreet locks and remove the obsolete alarm from a bedroom door.

- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 61, paragraph 13.2)

In particular, produce a policy to specify the frequency of supervision and ensure that this is adhered to.

Inspection judgements

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

This is the first inspection of the home. The small staff team enables the young person to develop some positive relationships with the adults caring for her. However, the manager and staff team lack consistency in communicating their expectations about behaviour and taking part in the daily routines. For example, although it is expected that meals are eaten together at the dining table to provide a social occasion, staff do not always challenge when the young person refuses to eat at the table and chooses to eat on the sofa in front of a television.

The young person’s attendance at a mainstream school is a great success given that going to school was sporadic before living in this home. At times, her attendance does drop, and on one occasion the young person refused to go to school for six consecutive days. During this period of absence, the manager and staff team did not take decisive or prompt action to encourage the young person to return to school as soon as possible. In addition, the staff did not request any work from the school to encourage the young person to complete at home. As a result, when the young person returned to school, she was behind in her studies compared to her classroom peers.

Staff have been effective in encouraging the young person to attend art therapy and routine health appointments. Persistence and support have enabled the young person to see health professionals after some initial reluctance. There are safe systems for the storage and recording of any medicines in the home. However, a list of staff names with specimen signatures is not available. Such practice would provide an additional safeguard.

The house is spacious and generally in good decorative order, with a maintenance programme scheduled. The young person is involved in the development of the home and garden, having created a fairy garden. Numerous posters and notices with written information are displayed on the walls. This detracts from a family-style home. Similarly, the padlocks securing loft hatches and a bedroom door alarm are not in keeping with the

overall pleasant appearance of this home.

Staff encourage activities and interests in the home and in the local area. Photographs and mementos are gathered for memory books, to create a record of positive experiences of living at this home. Despite some restrictions to safeguard the young person, she reports that she feels safe at this home and likes the staff. A parent and social worker report positively about this home. The social worker reports how committed the staff are in supporting the young person. In addition, the social worker says the manager and team work well in partnership with her and maintain regular communication.

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

On three occasions, the young person has gone missing. Staff are diligent in searching for and contacting the young person when she is not in their care, and these incidents are managed well. There were serious concerns about the young person's safety and welfare before coming to live at this home. These risks are now significantly reduced. Restrictions imposed by the court mean that staff supervision is necessary.

Physical intervention takes place when there are risks of young people harming themselves or others. Records show that a member of staff held the young person's wrists to guide them away from a known risk. It is understandable why the member of staff took this action, however this was not using an approved method of restraint and not recorded as a physical intervention. On six other occasions when restraint has been used, the records are sufficiently detailed.

The use of restraint has led to some allegations against staff. On one occasion, a member of staff involved in an incident took investigative steps and completed a referral to the local authority designated officer. This referral should have been progressed at a more senior level, and therefore, the home's child protection policy was not followed. Investigative steps taken before a decision is made by the designated officer could undermine any potential criminal investigations.

The use of consequences is sometimes inappropriate, and records are not always clear as to how long the consequence will last. Arranging for a young person to complete worksheets lacks creativity and is not restorative in nature. The staff lack meaningful engagement with the young person about the use of consequences in response to her actions.

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

This home has been without a registered manager since 30 April 2018. The director took interim management responsibility until the new manager was appointed in June. The manager was registered as suitable at the time of this inspection.

This home has been operating for seven months, providing care and support for one

young person. Short-break care for an additional child occurred in the summer. Despite the thorough compatibility assessment completed, the combination of this child and the current young person led to disruptive behaviour. Due to conflict between them, assaults on staff and throwing food in the home, the short break ended abruptly with the child moving to the provider's other home before returning to his full-time carers. The date the child moved to the other home is not recorded correctly in the register. It is a legal requirement to maintain such accurate records.

The full staff team ensures that agency staff are not required. Staff shortages are covered by the manager and the team, regular bank staff or employees from the provider's other home. Staff report positively about the support from leaders and managers.

Face-to-face training opportunities are provided to staff, as well as online learning. However, staff training in the use of physical intervention did not occur until five weeks after the young person came to live here. Although two staff had received training in their previous employment, the lack of training means that young people, and staff, were at risk of being injured through inappropriate use of restraint. Fortunately, no one was injured, however the inappropriate holding of wrists and absence of a record occurred before the staff training.

Staff report that they receive supervision and records confirm this. However, these meetings do not always occur at the frequency specified in the supervision agreement. Leaders and managers do not have a supervision policy in the home. The quality of supervision records is variable. Some evidence very thorough discussions with clear actions and timescales to support staff performance and professional development. In contrast, some supervision records lack focus on the young person and do not provide sufficient reflection on care practices.

Case records are generally well written and include the young person, where possible. There are good examples of discussions held with the young person, capturing their views and wishes. Records relating to behaviour management and allegations against staff require greater scrutiny to ensure that processes are correctly followed and sufficient details are recorded. The manager completes monthly audits and makes use of external monitoring from an independent person.

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: 1274341

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Park Blue Homes Limited

Registered provider address: Fairfield Lodge, Evenwood Lane, Evenwood, Bishop Auckland, Durham DL14 9NH

Responsible individual: Richard Parker

Registered manager: David Gilchrist

Inspector(s)

Clare Davies, social care inspector
Tracey Ledder, social care inspector

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