

1277045

Registered provider: Outcomes First Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to four children who experience behavioural and/or emotional difficulties. It is part of a larger organisation.

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 28 October 2020 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2021

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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 7 November 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/11/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
11/06/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
05/03/2019	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff have created a bright and welcoming home for the children who live here. The children are confident to make full use of the home to play with toys and games. Staff help the children to take part in activities, plan holidays and celebrate events. For example, staff organised a birthday party for one child and her family. Staff and children create beautifully bound memory books of their activities.

Managers and staff make sure that the children's experience of moving into the home is positive. Staff help the children to make choices about living in this home and their views are listened to. Managers have created a respectful environment for children and staff where everyone feels valued. For example, staff nurture and care for the children and avoid any technical language in front of them. One child is able to reflect that staff have created a safe space for her while she is also able to see her family.

All the children attend school or college and are making some progress. There is good communication between the school and staff. Staff provide effective routines for the children and build therapeutic support into their timetables to meet their complex needs. Staff help the children to form positive relationships with each other and with the staff.

Staff support the children to achieve their goals and to become more self-sufficient. One child is gaining experience in budgeting and regularly cooks for everyone in the home. Staff are flexible and sensitive in their approach to enabling children to develop at their own pace. For example, staff have supported one child to find a local job but continue to regularly monitor the child's health and wellbeing.

Staff continue to develop good working relationships with other professionals to meet the children's needs. One professional who contributed to the inspection stated that this could be improved on some occasions. Staff actively support the children to keep in touch with their families and other people who are important to them.

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

Children feel safe and know who to talk to if they are worried. Staff understand the risks associated with the children's traumatic childhood experiences. Their support for one child has considerably reduced the risk to the child's health and wellbeing.

Staff provide a safe and supportive environment for children who are at risk of harm. They adopt a therapeutic approach with children who make disclosures of abuse to ensure that identified risks are managed and reduced. Staff have professional discussions with other agencies to create a common approach and understanding to a child protection concern in order to improve outcomes for children.

The arrangements in place in respect of safer recruitment are good. Reference checks are completed. Staff confirm that they do not start work until all their checks are completed.

At times, staff have tried strategies to manage risks to the children which are inconsistent with the home's ethos. External professionals shared concerns about this with the inspector. Managers have learned lessons from these incidents and support staff to adapt their practice as new risks appear. For example, managers have updated the missing protocol for one child who loves to visit train stations. Staff now offer to go on train journeys with the child. This approach has reduced recent incidents involving the child.

The manager and staff carefully consider when it is necessary to use restraint to prevent a child from physically injuring staff. Overall, restraint is rarely used. Usually, staff use a low-level hold of a child for the shortest time to make a situation safe. On two occasions, the manager could have asked further questions to decide whether a restraint of a child was reasonable. This was followed up by the responsible individual during the inspection.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is experienced and highly regarded by staff and other professionals. She has created a nurturing, happy home where children are loved, and staff are valued.

The manager monitors the children's care plans effectively. She speaks to other professionals and staff to ensure a positive and appropriate response to the children's changing behaviour and emerging needs.

There is some inconsistency in practice. Not all staff record and escalate incidents well, for example, what constitutes a notification of a serious incident. However, the manager and staff do respond to the incidents appropriately and recognise when the home is no longer able to meet a child's needs.

Staff feel supported by the managers and each other. The responsible individual provides the manager with support and direction. Staff have regular opportunities to reflect on their practice in supervision and team meetings.

Leaders and managers identify through learning and reflection, the need to support staff to undertake training. However, not all staff have completed some of the mandatory and specialist training required for their roles. It has taken too long to source specialist training for staff but this is now booked. In addition, during the inspection, leaders and managers reviewed the training matrix to ensure that staff receive training they require to support them to undertake their roles effectively and with confidence.

Leaders and managers have challenged the organisation about the unnecessary restrictions on windows which are not required to meet the children's needs. No changes have yet been made.

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 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— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; 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 behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same; and de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour	19 November 2021

(Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(x)(xi)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that behaviour management approaches and the use of restraint are used only in line with the home's ethos and children's individual plans.	
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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) In particular, ensure that staff receive training they require to support them to undertake their roles effectively and with confidence.	19 November 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they are skilled at anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as considering the rationale for making or not making a notification of a serious incident. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55 paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should ensure that the home is a homely, domestic environment. In particular, review the use of window restrictors. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15 paragraph 3.10)

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: 1277045

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Outcomes First Group Limited

Registered provider address: Atria, Spa Road, Bolton, BL1 4AG

Responsible individual: Jon Edgecombe

Registered manager: Claire Wallace

Inspectors

Justine Hosking, Social Care Inspector

Paula Lahey, Social Care Inspector

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