

1277497

Registered provider: Hopscotch Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care for up to four children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

There is a manager in post, who has submitted an application to register with Ofsted.

At the time of the inspection, there were four children living in the home.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 9 March 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: 7 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/10/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
13/11/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Children are making progress in some areas. They have good relationships with staff, and each other, and enjoy some positive experiences.

Children have individualised care plans that describe their needs and how these will be met. However, in some cases, there is a lack of guidance about some aspects of children's care. This means that staff may not be clear about how to provide children with safe and effective care.

Children's progress in education is mixed. Some children are attending school regularly and doing well. Older children are less engaged and two children are not in education or training. Arrangements to support their learning at home, for example through set routines and timetables, are not yet in place.

Staff take time to listen to children and encourage them to be involved in the day-to-day running of the home. However, consultation with children could be strengthened through more regular group and one-to-one meetings.

The children's home is spacious, and is decorated and furnished to a high standard. Children take pride in their bedrooms, which they have individualised. They have enjoyed helping to choose colour themes and furniture for shared living areas.

When children leave the home, this happens in a planned way. Staff take time to make placement endings positive and several children have chosen to maintain contact with the home after they leave. This demonstrates the positive relationships children have with staff.

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

Children are supported to develop their understanding of personal safety and safe behaviour. As a result, risks to their safety and well-being have reduced over time.

There are some good examples of effective risk management. The manager recently worked well with external professionals to develop clear safety plans for one child, when some new concerns emerged.

However, some shortfalls were identified in children's risk management plans. In some examples, there was a lack of guidance for staff on how to manage risks to individual children. This means that children may not be protected from harm.

The home is located close to an area with fast-rising tides and quicksand, which can be hazardous. It is identified in the home's safe area risk assessment that all

children should be educated about these dangers when they move to the home. Staff said that they spoke with children informally about this, but there was no evidence that any direct work had taken place with children.

Children do not go missing from this home on a frequent basis. If this does happen, staff take appropriate action to support the children's safe return. Children have the opportunity to speak to an independent person on their return.

Staff have good understanding of children's needs, and why they may behave in certain ways. Staff are able to respond to challenging situations in a consistent and positive manner, which means that physical restraints do not occur.

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

There was no registered manager in place at the time of the inspection. However, a manager has been appointed and has submitted an application to register with Ofsted.

The home has experienced several changes in managers and staff over the last year. Measures were taken to minimise the impact of these changes on children, including a break in new children coming to live at the home, which was implemented for a period of several months.

Staff said that there have been positive changes since the new manager came into post. One staff member said that expectations were clear, and that there was an improved level of training and support.

Staff are provided with training relevant to their roles. However, training in relation to some children's specific needs has not been provided. This has been recognised and arrangements for the training to take place are being made.

All staff receive regular supervision, but meaningful reflection does not always take place. Better use could be made of supervision to reflect on practice and address potential improvements.

Some monitoring is effective, and has resulted in practice issues being identified and addressed. However, managers do not always make effective use of internal monitoring systems. This means that not all shortfalls or required improvements are recognised. More effective use of internal monitoring will help to support the home's continuous development.

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 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 understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(iv)(v)(ix))	15 April 2022
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; help each child to understand how to keep safe. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii))	15 April 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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; 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)(h))	15 April 2022
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a))	15 April 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. 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)
- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care, or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should undertake a review, every six months, that focuses on the quality of the care provided by the home, the experiences of children and the impact the care is having on outcomes and improvements for the children. This review should include the feedback and opinions of children and other stakeholders. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.2)
- The registered person should ensure that children benefit from regular direct work which is meaningful to their individual needs, and takes into account the

child's gender, religion, ethnicity, cultural and linguistic background, sexual identity, mental health, any disability, their assessed needs, previous experiences and any relevant plans. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.2)

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: 1277497

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hopscotch Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 19 Lancaster Road, Carnforth LA5 9LD

Responsible individual: Richard Witt

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Marie Cordingley, Social Care Inspector

Chris Scully, Social Care Inspector

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