

1278421

Registered provider: DMR Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It provides care for up to four children aged between 11 and 17 who may have had adverse childhood experiences.

The manager has been in day-to-day charge since September 2022. He has submitted an application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 July 2023

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: 5 May 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

On 2, 3 and 5 May 2023, Ofsted carried out a full inspection of the children's home. Serious and widespread concerns were identified in safeguarding practice and in the leadership and management of the home. The home was judged inadequate.

On 9 May 2023, Ofsted undertook a monitoring visit. Following these visits, Ofsted issued a notice to restrict accommodation and a compliance notice in relation to Regulation 12.

A further monitoring visit was undertaken on 20 June 2023 to review compliance with the notice issued. The steps in the notice had not been met. The compliance notice in relation to regulation 12 was reissued and the notice to restrict accommodation remained in place.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/05/2023	Full	Inadequate
09/08/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
14/06/2022	Full	Inadequate
09/06/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

There are three children living in the home, and one child has moved out since the last inspection. Inspectors identified significant and widespread concerns in safeguarding practice and management oversight of the home. Poor safeguarding practice and ineffective leadership and management of the home are having a significant impact on children's experiences and progress.

Care planning in relation to children's health is disorganised, and managers and staff have failed to meet one child's health needs. When one child fell from the conservatory roof of the home, staff did not access any medical treatment for him until the following day, despite the child showing visible signs of pain. Managers have not ensured that the child attends follow-up appointments to review the injury that he sustained. It is unknown whether the injury has healed. The child told the inspector that his injury was still causing him pain. This lack of action from staff compromises the child's health and well-being.

Since the last inspection, there have continued to be significant failures to respond to one child who has expressed suicidal thoughts. At the time of the inspection, there were no safety plans in place to support a child who was expressing suicidal thoughts, despite this being a known risk. As a result the child was not responded to. , This does not support a safe environment where children feel that they are listened and responded to. Children are not reassured that staff will take action to keep them safe when they express difficult emotions and feelings. One child told the inspectors that he is starting to shut down and is not sharing information with staff.

The way staff speak to children is inappropriate. The inspector viewed records, which identified shortfalls in the way in which staff speak to and write about children. For example, following a physical intervention, staff spoke to a child in a punitive way. On another occasion a child became upset when staff adopted an approach that placed blame on a child when he went missing from home. This is not identified or addressed by managers. This poor practice compromises children's opportunities to build positive relationships with adults who care for them.

The home presents as tired and in need of repair. Repairs are not undertaken promptly, and some issues create a health and safety concern. For example, a drainpipe has been broken when children have used this to climb onto the roof of the home. This has not been repaired and there are no systems in place to increase safety in respect of this issue. This does not currently support a safe, warm and welcoming environment for children.

Notwithstanding the shortfalls, children say that they have positive relationships with some staff. Children have made some positive progress since the last inspection. One child's missing from home incidents have significantly reduced, and he has

reengaged with external services who are supporting him. Two children attend school regularly, and one child has sat her mock GCSE exams.

Staff have responded to the views, wishes and feelings of two children who are siblings. When they expressed that they would like increased family time with their mother, this was explored and arranged. This is supporting the children's identify and emotional well-being.

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

Risk management in the home is inadequate. Managers fail to complete risk management plans that consider all known information to children. The plans are not updated with strategies to manage new and emerging risks. When some risks are identified, risk management guidance for staff is poor.

Staff are unable to manage children's behaviours and keep them safe. As a result, one child has been severely injured. For example, one child climbed onto the conservatory roof and fell off. There were no risk assessments in place in respect of this, despite the fact that another child had also managed to climb on the conservatory roof the week before. Managers and staff had not taken any preventative measures to prevent a further occurrence. The child sustained an injury as a result of the lack of action taken by managers and staff.

Since the last inspection, managers and staff have attended safeguarding training. Despite this, managers and staff do not understand the actions that they need to take to keep children safe and children continue to be at risk of harm. For example, when concerns arose about one child's emotional health, staff did not report this to managers and no action was taken to explore this or support the child's safety and well-being. The manager was unaware of this information and lacked understanding of the steps he should take to keep children safe.

Managers' and staff's response to children who go missing is poor. Missing from home protocols are identical for each child. As a result, they include inaccurate and copied information. For example, protocols state that children's mobile phone locations should be checked. Two of the children do not have mobile phones. In addition, one member of staff told an inspector that staff do not have access to the app that enables them to complete location checks. When children do go missing from the home, staff do not always search for children in line with missing protocols. In addition, a child told an inspector that staff do not always search for him.

The home's approach to safeguarding children who use the internet is inconsistent, and for one child it is poor. Managers and staff were unaware that a child was playing an online game that may not be age appropriate. This has not been explored. This lack of vigilance and understanding of age-appropriate content means children are at risk of harm.

Children are not supported to keep themselves safe. When risks have emerged, these have not been explored with curiosity and rigor. Records do not demonstrate

appropriate evaluation and overview from leaders and managers. Risks are not explored with children to increase understanding and help keep them safer. This poor practice leaves children vulnerable to harm.

Since the last inspection, the responsible individual has completed a review of recruitment practice in the home. New systems have been created to ensure a thorough approach to recruiting new staff. However, these systems have not been applied to agency staff. Leaders and managers were unaware of the outcome of checks completed for agency staff. As a result, managers were unable to demonstrate that agency staff had been safely recruited and were appropriate to be working in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Managers' oversight of the home continues to be inadequate. Managers have failed to adequately assess known risks to children, failed to ensure that staff take action to keep children safe, and have not had oversight of incidents that have occurred in the home. Poor management oversight has undermined the safety, well-being and progress of the children living in the home.

Reporting and recording is poor. Managers fail to review incidents and records. The inspectors found several examples of inaccurate recording and inappropriate language used by staff. Poor practice is not identified or challenged by managers. This means that staff are not supported to understand how to improve their practice when caring for children.

Not all staff have received training that helps them to understand and meet children's individual needs. For example, there are gaps in staff training in relation to mental health, self-harm, exploitation and managing challenging behaviours. Staff have not received training in substance misuse or missing from care, despite children's increasing risks in these areas. Records indicated that the manager has not undertaken any training relevant to children's risks and needs.

The latest quality of care report was of poor quality. The manager stated this was due to time constraints. Children have not been consulted about their views. It is unclear what learning has been derived from this period and what plans are in place to ensure that improvements are made to the quality of care that children receive.

External stakeholders provided mixed reviews during the inspection. One social worker was positive about the home and the progress children were making. However, another social worker told the inspector that there were times when a child was not appropriately safeguarded and that the care he received did not help him develop as he should.

The manager has made efforts to ensure that staff receive regular supervision and support through team meetings. Managers are working with the team members to identify their strengths and weaknesses through personal development plans. This has provided opportunities to upskill the staff team around safeguarding practice

and behaviour management. However, knowledge and learning acquired in these sessions are not being used in practice.

Due to the safeguarding concerns highlighted during this inspection, Ofsted is of the view that if any further children moved into the home this would compromise the safety of children already living there, as well as that of any new children moving in. Based on the information outlined above, Ofsted has issued three compliance notices, and the notice restricting accommodation already in place will be reissued for a second time.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)) In particular, ensure that improvements are made to the home environment, repairs are carried out promptly and children live in a safe environment.	5 September 2023
*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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to—	6 August 2023

understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding; take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child's health and well-being needs; and understand and develop skills to promote the child's well-being; 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)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)(c)) In particular, ensure that children are provided with medical intervention when this is required. In addition, that any medical appointments are attended without delay.	
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. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)) In particular, that staff help children understand the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and learn to manage their behaviour more appropriately.	5 September 2023

This requirement is unmet from the last visit and is restated.	
*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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; 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)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)) In particular, that there are improvements to the safeguarding culture in the home and all aspects of the compliance notice are met. This requirement is unmet from the last visit and is restated.	6 August 2023
*The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that—	6 August 2023

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 work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to 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)(a)(b)(c)(e)(f)(h)) In particular, that the staff team are trained, skilled and experienced to meet the needs of children and keep them safe. Additionally, that managers and leaders review monitoring systems to improve oversight of staff practice and records. This requirement is unmet from the last visit and is restated.	
A responsible individual must— have the capacity, experience and skills to supervise the management of the home, or the homes, in respect of which the responsible individual is nominated. (Regulation 26 (7)(b)) The refers to ensuring that the responsible individual reviews the effectiveness of their oversight of the home.	5 September 2023

This requirement is unmet from the last visit and is restated.	
A person may only manage a children's home if— having regard to the size of the home, its statement of purpose, and the number and needs (including any needs arising from any disability) of the children— the person has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills to manage the home effectively and lead the care of children. (Regulation 28 (1)(b)(i)) The refers to ensuring that the responsible person reviews the current day-to-day management arrangements and that the manager revisits training in relation to safeguarding children. This requirement is unmet from the last visit and is restated.	5 September 2023
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— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(d)) In particular, that agency staff are safely recruited and staff have the experience and skills to meet the needs of the children living in the home and keep them safe. This requirement is unmet from the last visit and is restated.	5 September 2023

The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. A notification made under this regulation— must include details of— the matter; the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter; must be made or confirmed in writing. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e) (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b)) In particular, that leaders and managers review the threshold for 'seriousness' in relation to current guidance and ensure that notifications are submitted without delay. This requirement is unmet from the last visit and is restated.	5 September 2023
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least every six months.	5 September 2023

In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—

the quality of care provided for children;

the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and

any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.

The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.

(Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (5))

* 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: 1278421

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: DMR Services Ltd

Registered provider address: D M R Services, 102 Queslett Road, Streetley,
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Responsible individual: Joanna Mountford

Registered manager: Warren Thomas

Inspectors

Natasha Skinner, Social Care Inspector
Kev Brammer, Social Care Inspector

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