

1280210

Registered provider: First Blue Healthcare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a private company and provides care for up to two children who have had adverse childhood experiences. At the time of this inspection, two children were living in the home. Both were spoken with during the inspection.

A suitably qualified manager is in post.

A responsible individual has been appointed but has not yet gone through the Ofsted suitability process.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 January 2025

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: 9 May 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/05/2023	Full	Good
17/05/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
25/05/2021	Full	Good
09/03/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home is warm, clean, tidy and well furnished. It provides children with a pleasant and welcoming place to live. As a result, children rate it highly, scoring it nine out of 10. One child described his bedroom as 'beautiful'.

Staff build positive relationships with children. They have sensitive conversations and use resources to help children learn to be safer and healthier, and to promote their independence and education. As a result, children are making progress.

The manager and staff work hard to ensure that children have access to education. They identify barriers and seek to overcome them. For one older child who is not in education, the manager has worked creatively to nurture their interests. This includes arranging work experience within the company. This support has enhanced the child's life experiences, and better prepared them for adult life.

Staff ensure children's physical and emotional health needs are met. When children require support for their mental health, staff ensure they get the help they need quickly. As a result, children are happier and more confident.

Staff recognise the importance of family relationships, working to promote and improve these. This contributes to children feeling settled and secure in the home. One family member said about the staff, 'I am overwhelmed with how amazing those people are.'

Since the last inspection, one child has moved out of the home. Prior to that, staff helped the child learn the skills they needed to live independently. They helped the child to move into their new home and to settle. Staff have remained in touch with the child, showing the child that they have adults who care for them.

The child did not want to move from the home, and the manager did not feel it was the right plan for the child. However, it was not apparent that the manager had challenged other professionals. This reduced staff's ability to ensure it was a positive move for the child.

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

Staff implement clear and consistent boundaries. They use natural consequences and reflection to encourage learning when children exhibit unwanted behaviours. As a result, children feel safe in the home and talk to staff if they are worried or upset. This has led to children being very settled. Since the last inspection, there have been very few incidents.

Staff are skilled at helping children to calm when they are anxious or upset. They have good relationships with children. Children are rarely restrained and there has only been

one incident of a child needing to be held to prevent them being harmed since the last inspection.

Children have a range of ways they can share their wishes and feelings and influence the care they receive. Although children know how to complain, they rarely do. Since the last inspection, one child has made a complaint. Managers took the complaint seriously and addressed the issue quickly to the satisfaction of the child.

Children are protected by the organisation's effective recruitment practice. Staff are vetted and assessed as suitable before any appointment is made. This procedure promotes the safety of the children by preventing unsafe adults from working with them.

Staff have a good understanding of children's needs and particular vulnerabilities and of how to keep children safe. However, risk assessments are not always updated quickly, and it is unclear if all staff have read children's most up-to-date assessments. This reduces the staff's ability to keep children safe and could lead to inconsistent practice when staff are managing risk.

On two occasions when children either expressed a wish to hurt themselves or others, staff did not fully assess the level of risk or act to mitigate it. None of these shortfalls resulted in harm to children. However, leaders and managers have not ensured that risks are thoroughly assessed, that effective action is taken to reduce the risk of harm to children, and that staff understand their roles and responsibilities.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Children speak highly of their dedicated manager. One child said: 'Sandra, the manager, is amazing. You cannot get better than her.' Another said: 'She is the best manager I have met while being in care. She is very good at understanding, listening and talking. If you ask her to get something done, she will do it.'

The manager is ambitious for the children in her care and for her staff team. The mechanisms for oversight in the home are robust and the manager has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home.

The manager has created a positive working environment and staff say that she is extremely supportive. One member of staff said: 'Sandra is the most supportive, empathetic and understanding manager I have ever had, and it is a pleasure to work alongside her.'

The manager ensures that staff are supported by regular supervision sessions, training and team meetings which are of good quality. This gives staff opportunities to reflect, learn and improve the care of children. Because of this, children are cared for by staff who are knowledgeable and motivated.

The manager builds effective working relationships with children's professional networks, ensuring that children receive care that is well coordinated and planned. Professionals believe the manager is empathetic and hard-working. One professional said: 'I think she is absolutely wonderful; I would like to bottle Sandra because she is a great manager. She is so empathetic. She wants to do anything she can to support [child's name] and encourage [child's name].'

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 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; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(vi)) This specifically relates to ensuring that: ■ risk assessments are updated in a timely manner ■ risk assessments fully consider the risks to all children ■ staff read those up-to-date risk assessments ■ staff always act to keep children safe.	28 March 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they work in close partnership with all those who play a role in protecting and caring for the child, and evidence what they have done to achieve engagement, including any actions taken to escalate concerns. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 11, paragraph 2.3)

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: 1280210

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: First Blue Healthcare Limited

Registered provider address: Seighford Hall, Clanford Road, Seighford, Stafford ST18 9NL

Responsible individual: Post Vacant

Registered manager: Sandra Yates

Inspector

John Tomlinson, Social Care Inspector

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