

1280210

Registered provider: First Blue Healthcare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately operated children's home is registered to provide up to two placements to children with emotional and behavioural difficulties on a medium- to long-term basis. It provides care for children aged between eight and 17 years with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The current manager started working for the company in May 2019. She is currently undertaking her level 5 qualification in leadership and management. She has also submitted her application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 30 September to 1 October 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

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

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

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: 19 February 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
19/02/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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 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; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(vii))	29/11/2019
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; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints 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)(e)(g)(ii)(h))	29/11/2019
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16	29/11/2019

(3)(a)(b))	
A person may only manage a children's home if— the person is of integrity and good character; 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; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the person in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 28 (1)(a)(b)(i)(c))	29/11/2019
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1)(3)(d))	29/11/2019
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which— sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular— provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response; and describe how and to whom staff are to report, without delay, any concern about abuse or neglect of a child. (Regulation 34 (1)(b)(2)(d)(f))	29/11/2019

Recommendations

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Inspection judgements

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

Since the last inspection in February 2019, the same child continues to reside at the home.

Staff do not always follow the child's risk assessments. For example, on one occasion when the child was undertaking a fishing activity, a member of staff did not adhere to the child's risk assessment. As a result, any strategies identified to reduce the level of risk to the child were not followed. Although the child did not come to harm on this occasion, the child cannot swim and so leaving the child unsupervised had the potential to place the child at risk of harm.

On occasions, the child was not cared for by two staff in line with her care plan. As a result, she has not always received the level of support that she requires. This had the potential to compromise her welfare.

The child has developed a keen interest in gardening. Staff support the child to grow vegetables and herbs for the home. The child has also had the opportunity to design and work on another children's home's garden within the organisation. Staff encourage the child to undertake activities that are important to her, which she enjoys and is good at. This boosts her self-esteem.

Staff support the child with her education and she attends college on a regular basis. The child continues to make progress with her learning from her starting point.

The child is receiving support to develop practical life skills such as cooking, laundry and budgeting. The child has a pathway plan in place. Staff and managers are clear on implementing this at a pace that suits the child's individual needs. This means that the child is being appropriately prepared for her next steps as she approaches adulthood.

The home is very well presented and maintained. The child has personalised her bedroom. As a result, the child is residing in a homely environment and is now valuing and investing in her personal space and belongings more.

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

Staff do not always follow procedures to promote children's safety and welfare. For example, on two separate occasions, a member of staff left their shift leaving the child in the care of one member of staff. This is not in line with the child's care plan. These actions had the potential to place the child at risk of harm. Furthermore, these incidents were not reported to managers immediately and were not recorded by staff. As a result, there is no clear audit trail of events that took place. This lack of transparency and failure to follow procedures has the potential to undermine the child's safety.

Staff do not always record issues of concern appropriately. For example, risk assessments do not contain information about the child having access to a lighter and matches and the potential dangers of this. This means that some information is not fully shared with all staff to enable them to act on this promptly. This does not promote the child's welfare.

When there are shortfalls in staff practice, managers do not consistently document their actions to address these concerns. This means that it is not always clear how they enable staff to learn from things that happen and improve their practice.

Staff undertake key-work sessions with the child on topics identified within her care plan. The quality of key-work sessions varies. Managers are aware of this and are looking at ways to improve consistency.

The child has reported that she is happy. She is able to speak to staff if she has any issues and feels listened to. This means that she can express her views, wishes and feelings.

Staff undertake training in physical restraint and only use this measure of control as a last resort to maintain children's safety. Staff provide the child with consistent and clear boundaries. As a result, the child knows what is expected of her.

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

There have been changes within the management of the home since the last inspection. The registered manager resigned in February 2019. An interim manager was in day-to-day charge of the home until the current manager started her role in May 2019. The manager has submitted her registration to Ofsted. However, it is not clear from gaps in recruitment checks how the provider has satisfied themselves that she is suitable for the role.

The registered provider also fails to ensure that suitable recruitment checks are undertaken on new care staff. As a result, potentially unsuitable adults are being allowed to work in the home.

Managers do not consistently use monitoring systems in the home to evaluate and assess the quality of care. When incidents have occurred within the home, managers do not always have full oversight of these to ensure that these have been dealt with appropriately. In addition, managers and staff do not always record things promptly and the quality of record-keeping continues to be variable. The lack of a clear audit trail does not help managers to monitor the service, understand its strengths and needs and establish whether any lessons learned have been implemented.

When the home's statement of purpose has been reviewed and updated, this has not always been sent to Ofsted as required. As a result, the regulator is not kept informed of any changes to the service or to staffing.

When new members of staff have joined the team, they have received a good induction. This helps them to understand their roles and to develop the basic skills they need to care for children.

Managers and staff receive regular supervision. This provides managers and staff with the opportunity to receive feedback on their practice. However, they do not always act on this feedback to improve the quality of care afforded to the child.

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: 1280210

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: First Blue Healthcare Limited

Registered provider address: Eagles Nest, Dunston Business Village, Dunston
ST18 9AB

Responsible individual: Elizabeth Nixon

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sarah Junor-Fitzpatrick: social care inspector

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