

1280623

Registered provider: Wrottesley Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home run by a small company. The home is registered to provide care for up to three children with complex needs.

The manager has been in post for six months and became the registered manager of the home on 26 September 2022.

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 September 2022

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 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: 16 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
21/04/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
02/12/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
23/04/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Three children live in the home. They have lived here for nearly one year or longer. Children told the inspector they are happy living in their home and the adults help them to feel safe living there. Children told the inspector they can talk to staff and feel well supported. Positive relationships were observed between children and staff. These positive relationships help children feel more settled.

However, one child has not received effectively planned care. Managers do not have the child's most up-to-date plans. Managers have failed to escalate requests for children's plans in a timely manner. This includes a child's education and health care plan [EHCP] which contains out-of-date information detrimental to the child and has led to the withdrawal of the child's offer of a placement from college. As a result, the child is not receiving formal education, which is having a negative impact on them. The child is struggling to feel motivated and is spending increasing amounts of time in their bedroom playing computer games. The manager is currently working with external professionals to address the child's education.

Two of the three children have had a holiday. However, no arrangements were made for the third child to have a holiday as the manager felt it would be difficult to manage their medical condition away from home. The manager has not considered how the child could be supported to ensure they enjoyed a holiday and new experiences. Consequently, the child has missed opportunities to enjoy themselves, to make new memories and to feel that they are being included.

Children know how to make complaints and raise concerns about the care they receive. When complaints and allegations have been made, these are taken seriously and the appropriate professionals are informed. However, there are occasions when managers do not support children in line with the home's internal policy and do not write to them to inform them of the outcome of complaints.

One child has a door alarm on their bedroom door at night. The child told the inspector they did not know why they had an alarm on their door. Managers have not completed a rigorous assessment of the child's needs to support the requirement for this measure and it is not clear why the alarm is used. As a result, the alarm is used unnecessarily, which impacts on a homely environment.

While there are significant shortfalls, there are elements of children receiving care to help them make progress. For example, two children who are attending education settings have made significant progress with their attendance. One tutor directly attributed this to the new manager's appointment. One child's headteacher reported that the child has made great progress since moving into the home, and they have been nurtured and well supported by staff.

Staff support children to develop their independence skills at a pace that suits their personal needs and development. As a result, children are learning to cook, clean and take care of their personal surroundings.

Staff support children to spend time with people who are important to them. This has included paying for one child and their parent to go on a day out and for a meal. Staff are respectful of children's wishes when they do not want to see family members and advocate on children's behalf when appropriate. As a result, children are supported in their wishes and feelings regarding their family life.

The house has ample space for children to enjoy time together and separately. Children have personalised their bedrooms and have a say in how their home is decorated.

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

There has been a serious incident that left one child at potential risk of harm and their welfare not being safeguarded. Staff failed to collect a child when they were missing from home and alerted staff to their whereabouts. The manager directed staff to advise the child to walk to a police station in the early hours of the morning. Due to the police station being closed, there were further delays in the child's safe return, which left them without appropriate support to return home for over two hours. Staff then arranged for a taxi to collect the child. The manager failed to reflect on the risky situation this put the child in and improve protocols to avoid a reoccurrence.

Children have missing-from-home protocols. However, staff do not always follow these and report children missing to police in line with their plans. As a result, there are delays in police looking for children who are missing from home. Additionally, one child's plan does not direct staff on how long to wait to inform the police that the child is missing. This has the potential to lead to inconsistency in staff practice and delays in finding the child.

Children's plans do not support staff to understand the actions they should take when known risks arise. This has the potential for staff practice to be inconsistent and impact on the quality of care and responses children receive. On one occasion the manager advised staff to call the police to manage one child's behaviour. The records are not clear why this was necessary and demonstrate poor management of the incident. This had the potential to put the child at risk of criminalisation. When the police were informed of the situation they did not attend but sent an ambulance to the home instead.

Managers have also failed to consider the potential impact of the home environment on children's known vulnerabilities and risks. For example, a toilet door was not able to be unlocked by staff in the event of an emergency. The manager was quick to have the lock changed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The manager has worked at the home for six months and has recently become the registered manager. She has the appropriate qualifications and experience for being a registered manager. She recognises the home is going through a transition period and further measures need to be implemented to support positive changes.

Despite the experience of the manager, there are shortfalls that impact negatively on the quality of care children receive. In one example, the manager advised staff to inform a child who was missing from home to find a police station rather than staff collecting them. She also advised staff to call the police to manage one child's behaviour. In addition, poor planning of how to meet a child's needs resulted in one child not having a holiday and the same opportunities as other children living in the home.

There are omissions in management monitoring systems to support oversight of the service. This has a direct impact on children's care. For example, the manager has not picked up on staff not responding to children being missing, in line with their plans. In addition, the manager has not reviewed staff practice when staff failed to visit a known place where a missing child was reportedly seen. The manager failed to ensure that one record of restraint details the effectiveness of the restraint. These are missed opportunities to further understand children's behaviours and to evaluate staff practice.

Children's records are not always written in a child-friendly way. For example, instead of using 'home', some staff often refer to it as a 'site'. This gives an institutional impression and reflects a poor culture in relation to language.

The manager and responsible individual are keen to make improvements. They aim to do this through looking at lessons learned to improve the quality of care and experiences children receive. This is not yet embedded or effective.

Staff told the inspector they feel well supported and that the new manager has had a positive impact. Staff are recruited in line with safe recruitment practice and supported with inductions and regular practice-based supervision. The responsible individual supervises the manager and information is passed on through supervision, showing that the responsible individual has oversight of children's progress and staff practice.

Despite staff feeling well supported, they have not benefited from training particular to children's known risks and vulnerabilities. This means there may be gaps in staff knowledge and understanding and consequently their responses could be inconsistent.

A requirement raised at the last inspection required managers to submit a quality of care review report to the regulator. This specifically referred to the need for the feedback and opinions of children about the quality of care they receive living in the home to be included. This shortfall remains unmet and the requirement has been restated at this inspection.

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 achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)) This specifically relates to managers requesting children's education plans and escalating concerns if there are delays that mean children are missing out on their education.	7 November 2022
The enjoyment and achievement standard is that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills. (Regulation 9 (1)) This specifically relates to staff planning to support all children to have a holiday.	1 December 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;	30 November 2022

have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(b)(d)) This specifically relates to staff ensuring children are safeguarded effectively and that they are appropriately supported when missing from home, including collecting them at their request. Additionally, staff are to follow children's missing-from-home protocols to avoid delays in children being reported missing from home. It also relates to ensuring that children's plans identify the actions to be taken by staff when risks occur. It also relates to ensuring that lockable doors can be opened by staff in the event of an emergency.	
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 staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of 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)(c)(f)(h))	30 November 2022

This specifically relates to the registered manager giving staff guidance that promotes the welfare and safety of children when they are missing from home. Also, to the registered manager ensuring staff have the skills to manage children's behaviours and not directing them to call the police without good reason. Also, to the registered manager recognising and addressing poor practice when having oversight of the actions taken by staff when children are missing from home. And, to staff receiving training in relation to children's known risks and vulnerabilities.	
The registered person must ensure that— the privacy of children is appropriately protected; children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iv)) This specifically relates to bedroom door alarms only being used to safeguard children. There should be a thorough and robust risk assessment to evidence their need, which should be kept under review. Children should know the reason why restrictions are in place.	13 October 2022
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(vii))	30 November 2022

Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must establish a procedure for considering complaints made by or on behalf of children. (Regulation 39 (1)) This specifically relates to following actions laid down in the procedure, namely writing to children after a complaint has been made to advise them of the outcome.	30 November 2022
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(b)) This requirement was raised at the previous inspection and is restated.	31 January 2023

Recommendation

- 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. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. For example, records should be child-friendly and use terminology that is not institutional, recognising that the home is a 'home' for children and not a 'site'. 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)

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: 1280623

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Wrottesley Care Limited

Registered provider address: Office 28, 28 Cleveland Street, Wolverhampton
WV1 3HT

Responsible individual: Shalana Malcolm

Registered manager: Joanne Hodson

Inspector

Jodie Lewis, Social Care Inspector

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