

2495371

Registered provider: Protea Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a two-bedded residential home. It is registered to support children aged 8 to 18 years, who present with having emotional and behavioural difficulties.

An interim manager has been in post since 1 March 2019, following the resignation of the registered manager.

Inspection dates: 30 April to 1 May 2019

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: Not applicable. This is the home's first inspection.

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

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; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(v))	24/05/2019
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23(1))	24/05/2019
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— details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(a)(ii))	24/05/2019
The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4. (Regulation 37 (2)(a)) In particular, this relates to the required record in the form of a register.	24/05/2019

The registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 16 (5)) In particular, this relates to the need to evidence that staff have the experience, understanding and training to support the therapeutic models described in the home's statement of purpose.	24/05/2019
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (3))	24/05/2019

Recommendations

- Where children placed in a home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, the registered person and staff must work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)

In particular, this relates to building a full-time programme of stimulating learning experiences to cover periods when a young person has no formal education arrangements.

- The registered person is responsible for ensuring that each child's day-to-day health and well-being needs are met. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.3)

In particular, this is to improve the monitoring of dietary intake and use evidence to inform healthcare planning on occasions that a specific need is identified.

- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and the principles of care as set out in paragraph 9.35 are respected. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

Inspection judgements

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

Children's progress and experiences are varied. Some positive progress is made, but children's experiences of living in the home are not good. For example, a social worker spoke positively about the progress made by a child. Improvements were noted in relation to the child being settled, developing relationships with staff and improved social interactions. This same child was also adversely affected by the behaviour of an older peer. This resulted in the child feeling unsafe and subsequently led to a placement move.

While there are reasons for children not being in full-time education, this is a poor outcome. The lack of structure and planning during periods when children are not in education, during what would be the school day, is a lost opportunity to promote informal learning.

Responses to concerns about children's health are not always effective. For example, concerns about a child's dietary intake have not been referred to a health professional or incorporated into placement plans. Additionally, there have been shortfalls in dental care.

In contrast, a social worker spoke highly of the support and nurture provided to a child during a particularly challenging period. The social worker spoke about how insightful staff had been. Staff provide children with emotional support.

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

The recently appointed manager has been responsive, but at times children have been left vulnerable by safeguarding arrangements.

Behaviour management is not yet good and there is weakness in management oversight and record-keeping. The new manager has improved the practical strategies to manage behaviour. This has included ending the practice of locking of internal doors. He has also identified and acted to improve inconsistencies in how staff respond to behaviour. Behaviour management records are at times poor. For example, the antecedents to a serious incident were not recorded. This restricts the scope for managers to evaluate practice and make improvements. The recording of debrief conversations, and records following the use of physical holds, fail to promote learning and development for staff. There is also a failure to maintain all areas of behaviour management records required by regulation.

Identified safeguarding concerns are not always used to inform future practice. For example, concerns about the behaviour of a child during a swimming activity had not

been taken forward into planned risk-management strategies.

Children have been allowed to cycle on roads and paths without wearing a protective helmet.

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

The home has had two managers since it first opened in October 2018. This has been unsettling for staff. Management stability is further affected by the resignation of the manager, who started work in the home in early March 2019. While staff spoke very positively about the confidence they had gained through the guidance of this manager, they are again a team without a manager.

The shortfalls identified across this inspection are linked to weaknesses in the oversight of leaders and managers. The staff are keen and committed to promoting positive outcomes for children. However, they are an inexperienced group, with very few staff having previously worked with children who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. As a result, staff require close support and detailed guidance to ensure that individual and group needs are met.

The service is not operating in line with its published statement of purpose. Since the home was registered, the statement of purpose has been updated to reflect the use of named therapeutic models of work. Staff lack confidence and knowledge about these models of working.

At the time of inspection, the interim and deputy managers were the only qualified staff. While arrangements are in place for other staff to undertake the required qualification, this position leaves the team vulnerable as a whole.

Shortfalls in regulatory records have been identified. While only one complaint has been received, the records do not demonstrate the actions taken or detail the complaint investigation. The home's admission register does not include all areas required by regulation. There is no impact on children because of this latter weakness, but this reflects a lack of leadership oversight.

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: 2495371

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Protea Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 317 Horn Lane, London W3 0BU

Responsible individual: Joy Bradley

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector:

Mary Timms, social care inspector

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