

2510201

Registered provider: Outbound Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private organisation. It provides care for up to two children who may have emotional and social difficulties.

There has been a recent change of manager, with the current manager only being in charge for a few weeks. The previous manager remains working for the organisation and was present throughout this inspection.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 7 September 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 February 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are cared for by a committed and enthusiastic staff team. Staff are empathetic and understand the impact of children's early life experiences on their current presentation.

Children move into and out of the home in a planned way whenever possible. On one occasion when a child was unable to tell his friends about his move, staff set up a video call, giving him the opportunity to explain his sudden departure. This relieved some of his anxieties about his move. Children also keep in touch with staff when they move on from the home, demonstrating the significance of the relationships formed while living in the home.

Positive relationships are evident between children and staff. Children said they get on well with all the staff and with each other. They spend positive time together, such as playing football or golf, and they enjoyed a trip away to a holiday park over the summer.

Children's engagement with education is positive, even when attendance has been poor prior to moving here. Staff act as strong advocates for children, ensuring that they attend the most appropriate educational setting. This enables children to achieve their full potential. Children have successfully established new friendship groups and enjoy meeting with their peers socially.

Children live in a warm and homely environment. However, there has been some delay in actioning some maintenance issues in the home. These include damage to the wall and furniture in one child's bedroom, mould in the bathroom and replacing some flooring in the home. This detracts from the welcoming environment that staff work hard to create.

Children make good progress while living here. One social care professional said, 'Staff communication is effective and timely. They always prioritise [Name of child]'s needs. I am confident they will continue to do so.'

Staff understand children's health needs and they seek professional advice when needed. They have recently completed bespoke training with the speech therapist for one child so that they are in the best position to support him in a meaningful way.

Staff appreciate the significance of children maintaining links with their family and go out of their way to promote this. This is appreciated by everyone and helps to promote positive relationships. Staff also ensure that children leave with an album of photos and mementoes of their time in the home. This means that children can remember the good times they had while living here.

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

The positive relationships that staff have with children enable them to de-escalate most challenging situations. In the main, children respect staff and listen to their advice. Staff work with children to help them develop more effective ways to manage their emotions. Physical interventions are rare, with the most recent occasion being almost a year ago. Records are clear about the need for the staff to intervene, and debriefs ensure that all parties receive support after the incident.

Staff have a good understanding of individual children's vulnerabilities. Risk management plans contain pertinent information and strategies for staff to implement to reduce risk. These documents are reviewed and updated following any incident, ensuring that they remain effective. However, the door sensor on one child's bedroom door was broken at the time of the inspection and had not been swiftly replaced, despite this forming part of the safeguarding strategy.

Children confirm that the rules and boundaries in the home are clear. The ethos of the home is to reward positive behaviour and celebrate children's achievements. When staff do impose consequences for negative behaviour, children say these are fair and understandable.

Regular key-working conversations ensure that children are provided with accurate information on pertinent issues, such as the misuse of drugs and internet safety. Targeted sessions also take place following an incident of concern, such as suspected cannabis use and the need for a room search. Despite being unhappy about staff action at the time of the incident, children understand that their response is designed to keep them safe, as staff care about them.

Robust staff recruitment processes ensure that only those suitable can gain employment in the home. This is designed to keep children safe. Good communication between staff and other relevant safeguarding professionals ensures that information is shared promptly and contributes to children's safety.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There has been a recent change of manager for the home. A new manager is now in post, who also manages another small home in the organisation. He is in the process of submitting a formal application for registration. He is suitably qualified and experienced. He is supported by a deputy manager, who has worked in the home since it was registered.

Staff say they feel well supported by the management team and that the transition of managers was handled smoothly and effectively. They feel valued as team members and able to contribute their views to the development of the home. Although there has been some staff changes over recent months, staff have left for a variety of reasons, including moving to more senior positions in other homes. There is a balance of experienced and new staff members; some staff have worked here since the home was registered almost three years ago. This has ensured

stability for children. Staff benefit from regular supervision and feel that managers are committed to their professional development. This motivates staff to do their job well.

Managers demonstrate a passion for developing the home and improving outcomes for children. Good-quality internal monitoring reports help target areas for development. The monthly external monitoring reports also help ensure that shortfalls in practice are quickly identified. However, the independent person rarely views children's bedrooms and, as the visits often take place during the school day, he does not often have opportunity to speak to children. This is limiting their effectiveness.

Some shortfalls in management oversight were identified at this inspection. These include discrepancies in records concerning the same event that had subsequently been signed off by the manager; the documents outlining the permissions delegated to staff by the local authority that were only partially completed; and the process for the manager to ensure that all staff were familiar with updated documents that have not been adhered to, making it ineffective. Increased management monitoring and auditing would help identify such issues so that remedial action can quickly be taken. Managers did take action to rectify these issues during the inspection.

Managers champion the progress of children and are passionate about improving their long-term outcomes. Feedback about the home is positive, with social workers reporting positive partnership working.

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 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; and that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(b)(d)) Specifically, ensure that swift action is taken to repair damaged door sensors and that maintenance issues, such as mould in the bathroom and damaged furniture in a child's bedroom, are addressed.	21 March 2022
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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) Specifically, ensure that discrepancies in recording are identified and rectified; ensure that delegated authority documents are fully completed; and make sure that the	21 March 2022

systems to ensure that staff are familiar with updates to children's documents are effective.	
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a)(b)) Specifically, ensure that children's bedrooms are consistently viewed and discussions are held regularly with all children living in the home.	21 March 2022

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: 2510201

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Outbound Care Limited

Registered provider address: Unit 2, Metropolitan Business Park, Preston New Road, Blackpool, Lancashire FY3 9LT

Responsible individual: Paul Cotton

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Mandy Williams, Social Care Inspector

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