

2510328

Registered provider: Hand in Hand Childcare

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to three young people who have suffered early childhood trauma. A private company runs the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2020.

Inspection date: 7 February 2023

Date of last inspection: 26 April 2022

Judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The care of children

Since the last inspection, one child has moved into the home and no children have moved out. At the time of the inspection, three children were living at the home.

The home is spacious and provides a homely environment. Children enjoy leisure activities both at the home and in the community. The children have also had a lovely time on an activity holiday. Children build good relationships with staff, and two children told the inspector they feel safe at the home.

Overall, the emotional and health needs of each child are supported well by staff. Two children have received additional support around substance misuse when concerns have been identified. However, there has been a significant delay in one child receiving his annual statutory health assessment. The manager has not sufficiently challenged this delay.

One child attends school and is making good educational progress. The educational progress of the other children is variable. The staff supported one child to secure an apprenticeship in line with his longer-term goals. However, he has recently decided not to engage in this, and staff are working with him regarding his next steps. One child is not engaged in education. The manager has held regular meetings in respect of supporting the child back into education. However, it was difficult to establish how staff are supporting the child to have constructive learning experiences while not in school. The child's plans lacked detail and the situation was not being reviewed sufficiently.

Children are encouraged to express their views and feelings through one-to-one and group sessions. One child has an advocate. However, two children do not yet have access to an advocate, despite this being identified as a need and referrals being made several months ago. This means that children do not have the support they need when important decisions are being made about their future.

The safety of children

Staff understand children's risks. However, risk assessments are not regularly updated and not all known risks and risk management strategies are recorded in these documents. In addition, follow-up actions after incidents are not always recorded. This limits staff's understanding of what is happening to reduce risk.

Staff have responded to and managed bullying behaviour well. This has been proactively addressed with the children through educational activities. Consequently,

children have developed an understanding about bullying behaviours and the impact they can have on other people. Children have been supported to explore their relationships with their peers when incidents have occurred. It was recorded that one child said that the actions of staff helped him to continue to feel safe in his home.

Staff generally manage children's behaviour well. As a result, the number of incidents is low and physical intervention has not been necessary to keep children and others safe. On one occasion, a challenging incident went on for a long time and the recording relating to what happened was not as clear as it could have been.

Positive behaviour is encouraged through the use of reward systems, and children are set age-appropriate targets and boundaries in line with their needs and risks. However, there have been occasions when consequences have not been proportionate to the unwanted behaviour displayed. The manager has recognised that staff are not taking appropriate action in line with the home's ethos and behaviour management policy. Further support and training have been identified by the staff team.

The number of incidents of children going missing from the home is low. When children do go missing from the home, staff respond proactively and work collaboratively with safeguarding agencies and children's family members where appropriate. Because of this, staff find out where children are and take steps to keep them safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

Some shortfalls in leadership and management continue. Although the manager has implemented a number of monitoring and review systems, these are not yet being used effectively. For example, internal monitoring systems are not yet good enough to identify shortfalls in children's records about their risks and experiences.

The manager does not always respond to and address the recommendations identified by the independent visitor. In addition, when an external professional raised concerns through the home's feedback process, the manager did not respond to this in a timely manner. This limits the development of the home.

Only one of the four requirements raised at the last inspection has been satisfactorily addressed. Action has been taken to support the continuing professional development of the manager. However, the effectiveness of this action is not yet realised. Shortfalls in monitoring and oversight and risk assessments, and the failure to escalate concerns with relevant professionals, have not been addressed with the manager by the responsible individual.

Staff are positive about working at the home and about the support they receive. Staff receive regular supervision sessions and annual appraisals. In addition, they receive some good training. The manager has continued to implement regular

upskilling sessions, which enables staff to reflect, learn and develop their understanding and skills.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/04/2022	Full	Good
26/01/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/11/2021	Full	Inadequate
21/01/2020	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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5(b)(c)) In particular, the registered person must challenge the local authority if children do not receive required services in a timely way. This requirement is not met and is restated.	21 March 2023
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)) In particular, risk assessments should clearly identify risk management strategies that are in place for children.	21 March 2023

This requirement is not met and is restated.	
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— 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)(f)(h)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that monitoring and review systems support them to proactively identify and address shortfalls in care. This requirement is not met and is restated.	21 March 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when children are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, staff support the child to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. This specifically relates to ensuring children have structure and regular opportunities for learning when they are not attending formal education. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards, page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- The registered person should ensure that children have access to appropriate advocacy support, and where possible this should be provided by a person that the child chooses. Looked after children are entitled to an independent advocate to advise them and ensure they have the support needed to express their views, wishes and feelings about their care and lives. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards, page 23, paragraph 4.16)

- The registered person should ensure that consequences used to address unwanted behaviour are proportionate. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards, page 46, paragraph 9.38)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2510328

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hand in Hand Childcare

Registered provider address: 20 Birmingham Road, Walsall WS1 2LT

Responsible individual: Rajvinder Kaur

Registered manager: Andrew Alexander

Inspector

Natasha Skinner, Social Care Inspector

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