

2510328

Registered provider: Hand in Hand Childcare

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private company, and it provides care for up to three children who have suffered early childhood trauma.

Since the full last inspection, the registered manager is no longer in post. A new manager was appointed the day before the inspection. The manager does not have a relevant qualification in leadership and management at this time.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 August 2023

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: 10 May 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

The home was judged as inadequate at the last full inspection in May 2023. As a result of the concerns identified, two compliance notices were issued in relation to regulation 12 and regulation 13 of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015. 10 requirements and two recommendations were made.

A monitoring visit was conducted on 1 June 2023. The purpose of this visit was to

review the progress made against the compliance notice in relation to regulation 12. Inspectors found that managers had not taken sufficient action to meet the notice. The compliance notice was reissued. A further monitoring visit took place on 4 July 2023. On this occasion, inspectors found that managers had taken sufficient action to meet the compliance notices under regulation 12 and regulation 13.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/05/2023	Full	Inadequate
26/04/2022	Full	Good
26/01/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/11/2021	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

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

Leaders and managers have worked hard to improve some aspects of staff's practice and the quality of care that children receive. However, despite this progress, shortfalls in children's care remain. This means that children do not always receive consistent, good-quality care that reflects their individual needs and enhances their day-to-day and overall experiences.

At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the home. Managers have worked with one child and the child's social worker in a planned way to support the child to not go missing from home. As a result, the child has settled and incidents have reduced. The child's social worker praised managers for being child-focused and said, 'I feel he's happier, more settled.'

Improvements to the home environment have continued. Staff have decorated children's bedrooms, and children have had input into the colour they would like. The hallway has been decorated and is now a more welcoming space. However, the laminate floor in one child's bedroom is worn, and communal areas lack personalisation and homely touches. Managers acknowledge that further work is needed to make the home a place that children can be proud of.

Staff register children with local health services, and all children have an annual health review. However, managers have not ensured that one child's healthcare record contains relevant information about the child's needs. Staff have not supported the same child to attend specialist appointments, and some appointments have been missed. This does not help to promote this child's health and well-being.

Since the full inspection in May, two children continue to progress at school and achieve good attendance. Staff have tried to involve one child, who is not engaged in education, in planned educational activities with limited success. However, managers have worked with teachers and the virtual school to ensure that the child has a school place for the new school term in September.

Staff consult with children in planned meetings and day-to-day conversations. They listen to children and support them to attend planned activities of their choice. Staff have recently supported children to plan a holiday, which children and staff will go on together. Sharing experiences helps staff to build good relationships with children, which has a positive impact on children's progress and experiences.

Staff understand the importance of maintaining family relationships. They ensure that children see their families and friends. As a result, children's emotional well-being is improved, and they retain a sense of identity with their families.

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

A child has gone missing from home on one occasion since the monitoring visit. Staff followed the missing-from-care protocol. This includes staff making every effort to locate the child. Although staff welcomed the child home, they did not explore details of where the child had been, despite this being an unknown location. This lack of professional curiosity means that an opportunity to keep a child increasingly safe has been missed.

Managers fail to ensure that risk assessments and behaviour management plans contain clear strategies to keep children safe and manage children's complex behaviours. This means that staff do not always have all the information they need to manage risks and safeguard children.

Staff carry out regular checks on children's electronic devices. However, staff have made limited progress in educating children to be safe online, in line with their age and independence. One child has completed a course about online safety. Staff have not reviewed this child's knowledge and understanding of this learning. They have not supported other children to complete this course or used other resources to educate children to be safe online.

Managers and staff are vigilant for incidents of bullying and take allegations of bullying by children in the home seriously. Despite this, incidents of bullying and unkind behaviour between children have recently increased. Managers do not yet have a clear plan to manage relationships between children and promote positive behaviours in the home.

Managers can demonstrate that good systems are in place to ensure the safe administration and storage of medicine. They also make sure that staff are safely recruited. This helps to ensure that only the most suitable people work in the home with vulnerable children.

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

Since the monitoring visit on 4 July 2023, the manager has left, and a new manager is in post. This is the third manager since the last full inspection. The current manager has been the deputy manager at the home and has limited experience of achieving and sustaining a good standard of care for children.

Managers have worked hard to meet the requirements and recommendations from the last full inspection. Of the eight remaining requirements, seven are met. A requirement in respect of educating children about online safety has been restated. A recommendation in relation to children's health planning has been made as a requirement. An additional three requirements have been made.

A new operations manager continues to provide additional oversight to the home.

The operations manager has carried out a thorough review of policies and procedures and implemented an action plan that focuses on improving the quality of care for children. This includes commissioning online training in the therapeutic care of children.

The responsible individual and the manager use a range of monitoring systems to maintain oversight of the home. These systems are not fully effective because managers do not always critically evaluate incidents and challenge poor practice. Additionally, managers are not professionally curious when children place themselves at risk. For example, managers did not talk with a child about their possible substance misuse when a cannabis grinder was found in their room.

Since the last full inspection, three staff have left the home and three have joined. Of the 16 staff who work in the home, only six have a relevant qualification. Managers acknowledge the relative inexperience of the staff team and have plans in place to recruit more experienced staff into management positions.

Staff receive regular good-quality supervision. This helps them with their development and to reflect on their practice. Staff say that the team works together to support one another and children. They say they feel supported by managers and that morale is 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, 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 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that risk assessments give staff clear guidance about how to manage children's risks and that staff help children understand how to keep themselves safe online and to use electronic devices safely, in line with their age and understanding.	30 September 2023
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff—	30 September 2023

understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them; and that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ix)(xiii)(b)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that staff promote and educate children about positive behaviour and the negative impact of bullying on themselves and on others.	
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans; take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child's health and well-being needs. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(iii)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that children's health plans contain information about all specialist services that children receive and that staff support children to attend health appointments.	30 September 2023
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.	30 September 2023

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(e)(h)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that management arrangements are stable and that managers are professionally curious when monitoring incidents and promote professional curiosity with staff.	
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. (Regulation 28 (1)(a)(b)(i)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that the person in day-to-day charge of the home is able to manage the home effectively.	30 September 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the children’s home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of their children. In particular, ensure worn flooring is replaced when needed and the home is personalised. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 13.9)

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: 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: Post vacant

Inspector

Karen Gillingwater, Social Care Inspector

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