

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 provides care and accommodation for up to three children who have suffered early childhood trauma. A private company runs this home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2020.

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 April 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 **requires improvement to be good**

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

Date of last inspection: 26 January 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/01/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/11/2021	Full	Inadequate
21/01/2020	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of this inspection, there are two children living in the home. Children say they like living at the home. One child told the inspector, 'When I moved in, I felt like I had lived here for ages.' Children were observed to be relaxed, happy and comfortable in this home.

Children are now more involved in their care. Staff consult children about different aspects of their care plan. For example, discussions are held with children regarding the information contained in their placement plan, healthcare plans and risk assessments. Staff record children's views. This helps children to feel part of decisions that are made about them.

Both children attend school every day. One child had not been to school for four months before he moved into the home. Managers have attended meetings with the school to ensure that appropriate support is in place. The child has gradually built up his confidence and now attends school each day.

Staff support children to lead healthy lifestyles and achieve better physical and mental health. Children are involved in meal planning, which focuses on healthy choices. Staff encourage children to go food shopping with them. During the inspection, the inspector observed one child preparing a meal and the other child was involved in setting the table. This helps children to develop important life skills.

Managers and staff make sure that children access recreational activities and explore their interests. For example, one child has a passion for the theatre. Staff took the child to a theatre production that supported his interests and at the same time educated him about racism and intolerance. Both children told staff they wanted to go ice skating and they now do this regularly. This has helped the children to build a positive relationship with one another.

Managers and staff help children to maintain positive relationships with people who are important to them. For example, one child told the inspector he has been involved in developing a plan that supports him to maintain contact with his birth family. As a result, the child understands the plan and the expectations in place. Another child living in the home has a clear plan in place for keeping in touch with his sibling.

Staff support children to explore their identity and there has been a greater focus on exploring individuality within the home. However, one child told the inspector that he wants more support in exploring his individuality. Because staff lack confidence, consultation with the child about this issue is limited. As a result, staff are not proactively exploring the child's wishes and feelings in this area.

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

Children say that they feel safe living in the home. Managers have explored children's known needs and risks before they move into the home and taken time to understand them. Effective risk management has supported children to feel safe, despite facing significant changes in their life.

Children have positive relationships with staff. Children say that they can speak to staff or managers if they have concerns or worries. For example, one child who has risks relating to self-harming behaviour has approached staff when he has superficially self-harmed. He has talked to staff about this and been offered therapeutic support. Positive and trusted relationships between staff and children mean that risks are identified quickly and children receive appropriate support.

Children benefit from clear routines and boundaries. A child told the inspector that consistent routines had helped him settle into the home. Because children know what is expected of them, there have been no behavioural incidents or physical interventions since the last inspection.

Staff complete a wide range of key-work sessions with children. These include work on health, education, the risks around online safety and relationships. Further key-work sessions on bullying mean that children understand behaviours that are acceptable and the impact of bullying behaviours on others. Staff have supported children to explore their emotions and the reasons behind behaviours that are challenging. This includes helping children to consider triggers and to develop effective coping strategies. Good support promotes positive behaviour and helps children to feel safe.

Staff support children to take proportionate risks. One child wanted a mobile phone, to feel included with his friends at school. The child told the inspector he was happy he had been given a phone. He said, 'I feel trusted,' and 'I can message my friends.' He had been involved in choosing a parental control app for monitoring his use of the phone and had signed a mobile phone agreement. However, the risk assessment did not include key information about what apps were considered safe for the child to use. This affects how well the staff team can manage and minimise potential risks around the child's phone use.

Staff complete risk management plans for each child to identify and reduce risks. However, one child's plan contained contradictory information when compared by the inspector to his missing-from-home protocol. Some staff members were unable to describe the missing-from-home protocols in place for children and one member of staff did not know where to access this information. Children do not go missing from the home. However, these gaps in information have the potential to leave children vulnerable.

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

The responsible individual and registered manager have undertaken a range of bespoke training sessions to support their own professional development. The manager is in the process of developing his skills and has not yet had the opportunity to embed his learning to ensure that he manages the home in a consistently effective way.

The inspector identified shortfalls in some aspects of record-keeping. For example, risk assessments do not always reflect accurate information, clear guidance was not in place for staff around missing-from-home procedures and some records included incorrect dates. Leaders and managers addressed these shortfalls during the inspection but have not proactively identified these through their monitoring and review systems.

Ineffective oversight has impacted on a child who recently started using a mobile phone. Despite a parental control app being in place, the manager failed to take proactive action when the trial period expired. This meant that direct supervision and monitoring of the child while he was using his phone increased, as less intrusive monitoring via the app was not possible. Although the child was not exposed to risk, this resulted in unnecessary supervision levels.

The manager does not always escalate his concerns when children do not receive services they need. For example, a referral has been made for advocacy support for one child. However, when this has not progressed, the manager has not escalated this with the child's local authority.

Staff receive regular supervision and say that they feel supported. However, the manager and staff have not received appraisals in the last 12 months. This is a missed opportunity to assess staff's continued fitness for their roles and ensure developmental action plans help to enhance staff's skills and experience.

The responsible individual continues to be involved in the day-to-day management of the home. She has tried to set up practice-based supervision for herself, however this has been unsuccessful. This prevents the responsible individual from having a forum in which she can review her practice and develop insights to drive up standards in the home.

Leaders and managers have made improvements to the quality of care review report. However, this report still does not provide a clear analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the home, nor does it include a clear action plan for the next six-month period. This does not support the home's development.

The appointment of a new deputy has provided the manager with effective support. The deputy manager has ensured weekly coaching sessions have been implemented to enhance the knowledge and skills of staff. A wide range of topics have been covered, such as safeguarding, managing allegations, missing from home, self-harm,

bullying, key-working sessions and effective communication. Additionally, staff have received training to support them with meeting the specific needs of children. This has included trauma and mental health awareness. Staff reported that the focus on professional development has been insightful and led them to feel more confident in their roles.

At the last inspection, shortfalls were raised in respect of the workforce development plan and the statement of purpose. Managers have worked hard to review the quality of these documents. As a result, they now meet regulation.

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.	8 June 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; 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, staff should be provided with clear guidance and understand the steps they should take should a child go missing from the home. In addition, risk assessments should clearly identify risk management strategies that are in place for children.	8 June 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— 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.	8 June 2022
If the registered provider is an organisation, the organisation must ensure that the responsible individual undertakes such continuing professional development as is necessary to ensure that the responsible individual has the skills needed for supervising the management of the home. The registered manager must undertake such continuing professional development as is necessary to ensure that the registered manager has the skills needed for managing the home. (Regulation 29 (2) (4))	8 June 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. This appraisal should take into account, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and children in the home's care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 16.1)
- The registered person should ensure that the regulation 45 report identifies areas of strength and possible weakness in the home's care. The report should clearly identify any actions required for the next six months of delivery in the home and

how those actions will be addressed. The whole review process and the resulting report should be used as a tool for continuous improvement in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', paragraph 15.4, page 65)

- The registered person should ensure that staff understand that they have a responsibility to observe, notice and respond to children who are expressing their views, acknowledging that it is not the sole responsibility of the child to 'tell'. In particular, children should be consulted regularly to ensure their support needs are being met. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.10)

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: Andrew Alexander

Inspector

Natasha Skinner, Social Care Inspector

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