

2519269

Registered provider: New Futures (children) Services

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and operated by a private company. It provides care and accommodation for up to two children aged eight to 18 with social and/or emotional difficulties.

The home's registered manager has the relevant qualifications and has been in post since July 2019.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

An assurance visit was completed on 4 and 5 November 2020, which identified widespread concerns in relation to the care and protection of children.

We last visited this setting on 15 December 2020 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 August 2021

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: 7 January 2020

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
07/01/2020	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children experience positive relationships with staff and enjoy spending time with them. Staff are very child focused and the well-being of children is at the centre of their practice. Children are happy at the home and engage comfortably with staff.

Staff and managers recognise the importance of children maintaining contact with family members. Staff support the children when visiting their families. This promotes a sense of belonging for the children and allows them to maintain important relationships.

In general, children experience positive moves into and out of the home. The manager ensures that children are welcomed into the home carefully and in a planned way. For one child, a video was sent to them of the home, and they were able to visit the home on several occasions and meet with the other child living there. This helps children to settle into the home. When a child leaves the home, the manager and staff give them photographs and a memory book. This provides children with a positive reminder of their time in the home.

Staff support children to develop their independence. They use key-work sessions to identify and consider children's desired outcomes and use this knowledge to inform children's independence plans. As a result, children are being prepared for the opportunities and challenges of adult life.

Children's views are valued. 'Young people's meetings' provide children with the opportunity to share their wishes and feelings with staff. For example, one child requested a double bed and LED lights in their room, which were provided. As a result, children feel listened to and are able to influence the quality of care they receive.

Staff ensure that children have access to an educational placement, but not all children make progress in their education. For one child, their attendance at school decreased while living at the home. This was despite the efforts made by staff and the manager to re-engage the child in education. These included regular communication with the child's school and the implementation of weekly education planners to ensure that staff supported the child with their learning. However, this was not effective, and the child's attendance did not improve while living at the home. For another child, who recently moved into the home, staff are supporting them to obtain a college placement so that they can gain further qualifications. This enhances their opportunities in adult life.

Staff and managers were unable to provide the required level of support for one child. This was because not all the required information on the child's needs was made available by the local authority at the planning stage. However, there were

missed opportunities for the manager to be professionally curious and obtain further information to inform the decision to admit the child. As a result, the child was admitted to the home but the placement later became unsustainable and it was felt that this was not a suitable long-term placement. This led to the child experiencing a placement breakdown that may have been avoidable.

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

Managers ensure that staff have a good understanding of the children's risks and the action they must take to safeguard children. When risk assessments for children who have recently moved into the home have not been fully completed, the manager ensures that staff have access to and understand the relevant information from the placing local authority. As a result, staff have the necessary knowledge and understanding to keep children safe.

Staff and managers support children to understand risks and to develop their skills in managing their feelings. Regular key-work sessions take place that are relevant to the individual needs of the child. For one child, session work has been completed on emotions, which is a key area in the child's care plan. This helps the children to understand and manage their risks to improve their safety.

Despite several incidents involving damage to property, the level of physical incidents is low. Staff successfully use the model of support that is in place at the home to support children to manage their emotions. For example, for one child playfulness was a key approach that was effective in de-escalating difficult situations. As a result, staff implement their training well, which on the majority of occasions avoids the use of physical restraint.

When physical intervention was required, this was proportionate and necessary for the safety of the child and others. However, the manager did not ensure that the record indicated the person/s using the measure and the location of where the measure took place. He did not ensure that the child was spoken to about the measure. On one occasion, the manager was involved in the incident and also completed the debrief. This did not provide an impartial review. Therefore, the recording is not clear and hinders the manager's and senior leaders' oversight of restraint practice within the home.

Managers have effective working relationships with the police. For example, the manager arranged for a vulnerability police officer to speak with one child to help educate them to reduce the likelihood of them being involved in the criminal justice system. This was effective and reduced the level of incidents at the home.

When a child went missing from the home, staff followed risk assessments and procedures. However, the documentation relating to this incident is not fully complete. This hinders the manager's and other safeguarding partners' oversight of practice within the home.

Overall, the manager ensures that safer recruitment checks take place. However, one member of staff has been employed without a gap in their employment history being explored. This increases the risk of unsuitable people being recruited.

The manager ensures that regular health and safety checks are completed to make sure that children live in a well maintained and safe environment. However, during the inspection it was not clear if managers had considered the gap between a door and the floor and whether this complied with fire regulations. As a result, it is not clear whether sufficient safeguards are in place if a fire was to occur.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has a strong vision for the home. He has high expectations for what the children can achieve. This supports children to achieve positive outcomes in their lives.

The manager is enthusiastic about providing good-quality care to children. He works closely with professionals, and the feedback from them is positive. This partnership working helps children to feel safe.

Managers and staff receive regular and effective supervision sessions. These are detailed and include discussions that consider the children's needs, staff training needs and any personal matters relating to the member of staff. This allows staff to receive appropriate support and for their performance to be monitored and developed to improve the experiences of children.

The manager is a reflective practitioner. He uses lessons learned from previous experiences to improve the service. The manager has a good understanding of the strengths of the home and areas for development. He uses this knowledge to improve the quality of care children receive. For example, he arranges training to develop staff's knowledge and improve their practice. This ensures that children experience a continually improving service.

In contrast, some aspects of the manager's monitoring require improvement. For example, the quality of care review' is not clear in parts and there are some inaccuracies. There was no consultation with staff or parents, and there was limited consultation with the child who was living at the home during this period. This is a missed opportunity to obtain feedback to aid the development of the service. Furthermore, shortfalls in reports completed by staff have not been identified or acted upon. This could compromise the manager's oversight of staff practice.

From March 2021 to August 2021 no children lived at the home as the manager wanted to ensure that children could be cared for suitably and safely by the staff team. To support the manager in decision-making, a skills analysis of each staff member was completed. The outcomes have underpinned decisions made at the referral stage of placements. As a result, careful consideration has been given to the skill set of the staff team and to the two children currently living at the home. This

means that children are cared for by staff who have the knowledge and skills to meet their needs.

The manager has not consistently escalated concerns when placing authorities have not met their statutory obligations, for example when a 72-hour placement plan meeting did not take place after a new child was admitted to the home. In this example, the child's welfare was not compromised due to the quality of care provided by staff. However, a delay in this meeting taking place could result in a child's needs not being met.

On another occasion, the manager did not seek clarity from the placing authority regarding a child's delegated authority referring to a 'foster carer'. As a result, the document does not delegate authority to the manager. This could lead to professionals who do not have authority making decisions for the child.

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— 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 (c)) In particular, the manager is to ensure that concerns are escalated and the placing authority is challenged when meetings do not take place as planned, where documents are not up to date and where care plans are not provided.	17 December 2021
The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. 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— the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person") within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record	17 December 2021

confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (2) (3)(a)(iii)(iv)(vi)(c)) In particular, the manager is to ensure that the behaviour management policy is revised so that the debrief process when the manager is involved in a physical intervention is clear. The manager is to ensure that the record indicates the person/s using the measure and the location the measure took place, and to ensure the child is spoken to about the measure.	
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it. The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(b) (5))	17 December 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home complies with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.). In particular, seek guidance in relation to the minimum gap below a fire door. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that they maintain good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguard children and minimise potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 2519269

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: New Futures (children) Services

Registered provider address: 77 Francis Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B16 8SP

Responsible individual: Tyrell Simpson

Registered manager: Creaton Allen

Inspector

Melanie Griffin, Social Care Inspector

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