

2522240

Registered provider: Investing in Children

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private organisation and may provide care for up to five children who have emotional and social difficulties.

Four children were living in the home at the time of inspection. The inspector spoke to all four of the children during this inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2023.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 August 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 20 June 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/06/2023	Full	Good
18/10/2022	Full	Good
13/12/2021	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13/07/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have developed positive and trusting relationships with staff. The Staff speak about the children with enthusiasm, warmth and compassion. Feedback received from professionals reflects the staff's unwavering commitment to the children.

Children experience a variety of activities that enhance their social experiences. These include attending local social groups and events. Children enjoy annual holidays and, at times, travel abroad. These experiences help children learn new skills, contribute to their personal growth, and create lasting memories.

Equality and diversity are celebrated in the home. Children are supported in exploring their identities. Children can talk to staff freely about their feelings and emotions, and staff will sensitively support them in participating in local LGBTQ+ events to celebrate diversity. This helps children in promoting a more positive self-image.

Children are supported to attend education, and they are making clear progress from their starting points. Some children have recently finished secondary education and their achievements are widely recognised and celebrated in the home. There are plans for the children to access further education and training work in the near future.

Children are supported to become more independent and develop new skills, depending on their age and understanding. They are encouraged to complete chores around the home and learn about travelling independently. This helps children learn the skills they will need as they move towards adulthood.

Staff understand the importance of helping children see their close family and friends. They support the children to keep in touch with those people who are important to them. Staff proactively address any difficulties that arise so that the children can continue to have stable networks around them. Children said their family and friends are welcome in the home. This helps children maintain a sense of identity and connection to their loved ones.

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

Children are supported to identify and understand risky behaviours and why staff are worried about them. There is a nurturing response from staff when incidents happen, and there is encouragement to seek appropriate support from professionals. Children's plans are comprehensive documents, with clear steps for staff about how to manage risks.

When children are missing from home, staff thoroughly search the local areas and make regular attempts to contact them. Staff have formed relationships with children's friends and family members, and contact details are updated in plans to help staff know who to contact when children go missing. The manager has sought guidance and support from the police and external agencies to assist them. The manager is proactive in seeking meetings with other professionals and gaining their advice to try to reduce these missing-from-home incidents.

Physical intervention is a last resort measure to ensure everyone's safety. When incidents take place, the manager and staff take time to reflect on what happened and consider what they could do differently to support children. This enables staff to improve the care provided to children. Staff help children reflect on their behaviour and understand why they may be struggling to manage their feelings.

Fire safety equipment is locked away, which prevents staff from easily accessing it in the event of a fire. This arrangement is against the home's fire risk assessment. There has been no review to determine whether this arrangement is necessary in accordance with the children's current risks. The manager addressed this shortfall during the inspection but needs to continue to monitor this.

Staff use rewards and consequences to promote socially acceptable behaviours. However, the use of consequences is not yet consistently effective. At times, the amount of restitution is unreasonable, and children have not been offered opportunities to complete restorative or reparative work. This is a missed opportunity to help children understand the impact of their actions.

Safer recruitment process has not been followed. The manager did not explore the gaps in employment and seek a reference from the last employee for one staff member. This has increased the risk of children being cared for by inappropriate adults.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has high aspirations for the children. She knows the children well and has systems in place to review their care. The manager is leaving the service imminently, and the senior leadership team has ensured that there is an interim management arrangement in place to support the children and staff team following her departure.

Staff said that they enjoy working at home and that morale is good. Staff value the support they receive from the manager. Staff receive formal supervision regularly, which provides them with time to reflect on their practice and supports their ongoing development.

There has been a high level of staff turnover since the last inspection, and the manager has worked hard to secure a stable staff team. The manager talked to the children to let them know the changes due to take place; however, one child said

they were still worried about the changes once the manager left. The manager has planned to spend more time with the children before she leaves to assure them.

The manager has worked hard to ensure all the requirements and recommendations made in the last inspection have been met.

New staff have yet to complete the providers' mandatory training, such as in first aid. The manager has not ensured that there is always at least one person on duty who has a suitable first aid qualification. This means the children may not be safeguarded effectively in the event of an emergency.

The manager has not notified Ofsted of one allegation against a member of staff. This oversight has prevented Ofsted from understanding how allegations are investigated to safeguard children.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home; provide adequate means of escape from the home in the event of fire. (Regulation 25(1)(a) (b))	6 September 2024
No measure of control or discipline which is excessive, unreasonable or contrary to paragraph (2) may be used in relation to any child. The following measures may not be used to discipline any child— imposing a financial penalty, other than a requirement for the payment of a reasonable sum (which may be by instalments) by way of reparation. (Regulation 19 (1)(2)(f))	6 September 2024
The registered person must ensure that— at all times, at least one person on duty at the home has a suitable first aid qualification. (Regulation 31 (2)(a))	6 September 2024
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home,	6 September 2024

if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).

The requirements are that—

full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.
(Regulation 32 (1)(2)(a)(b)(3)(d))

Recommendation

- The registered person should notify Ofsted and other relevant persons if there is an incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home which the registered person considers to be serious. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)

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: 2522240

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Investing in Children

Registered provider address: Sjevoll Centre, Front Street, Pity Me, Durham DH1 5BZ

Responsible individual: Robert Medcalf

Registered manager: Ann-Marie Lang

Inspector

Cherie Chen, Social Care Inspector

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