

2522240

Registered provider: Investing in Children CIC

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private provider. It provides care and accommodation for up to five children who may have emotional and/or social difficulties.

The home was registered in May 2019. There is no registered manager in post.

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

We last visited this setting on 15 and 16 September 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 July 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/02/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
20/08/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

Not all children are supported to make educational progress. Some children attend an educational setting and have developed aspirations regarding their future. However, staff do not consistently promote education for all children. This means that children do not achieve their education targets and are not always helped to value education.

Children are supported by staff to attend routine health appointments and to access additional support for more complex health needs. Staff offer guidance to help children to understand the possible effects of lifestyle choices, such as substance misuse and smoking. However, staff do not discuss other relevant health issues with children. This means that there is not sufficient advice available to promote good health for some children.

The manager assesses the suitability of children's transitions into the home, taking into consideration the needs of the children already living in the home. Staff plan introductions, giving children the chance to meet those who they will live with and to get to know their caring adults. However, care planning documents do not consistently identify the arrangements in place for when children see their family. This could lead to inconsistent care.

Staff develop individualised strategies to support children to manage their emotions. Children develop trusting relationships with staff which helps them to feel happy and settled. One child said, 'The staff are amazing, they listen to you and they would do anything for you.'

The manager ensures that children's wishes and views are listened to and acted on. Children enjoy having a new pet dog. Each child takes part in the daily care of the dog, which provides children with a sense of responsibility. In addition, the home now has a new gym and a vibrant well-stocked games room.

Children go on regular trips and outings with staff. Children enjoy a broad range of experiences which are opportunities to have fun and to make positive memories.

Staff use incentives to encourage children to develop their understanding of positive behaviour. Staff recognise and praise children's achievements and make a great deal of effort to celebrate children's significant events. This shows children that they are valued.

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

Children's risk assessments do not always identify all their known vulnerabilities. This means that, in these instances, there is no guidance for staff to follow. The manager has failed to ensure that children's risk assessments are updated promptly when new risks emerge. The risks that are documented contain guidance for staff to follow. There has been a significant reduction in some risks, including incidents where children go missing from home. This demonstrates that children become increasingly safe.

Staff demonstrate that they are not familiar with all the welfare checks that should be made for one child. This shortfall has not adversely affected the child, but there is a potential risk of harm. The language used in care planning documents is sometimes stigmatising, which is not useful to children.

Children are helped to understand the processes in place to complain and say that staff listen to them and take them seriously. However, the children's guide does not include the details of all the people who children can contact externally to share issues. This limits the range of options available to children.

Staff use key-working sessions to help children to develop an understanding of what it means to keep themselves safe, such as staying safe online, safe relationships, and sexual health.

Staff use sanctions to help children to understand that there are consequences for their actions. However, at times the sanctions imposed are not appropriate. There is no manager's oversight of this area of staff's practice. This means there is no consideration as to whether this practice is proportionate or fair.

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

There is no registered manager. An interim manager was appointed in May 2021. They are in the process of applying to be registered with Ofsted. The interim manager is supported by a deputy. Occasionally, more than half of the staff caring for children are agency staff. This means that children do not always have sufficient staff to provide them with continuity.

The provider has failed to ensure that safe recruitment practice is followed. Checks and verification of staff's previous employment are not consistently undertaken. This means that there is not full and satisfactory information held regarding staff.

Staff have completed mandatory training. However, a significant proportion of staff have not completed training to help them to understand children's specific needs. This limits the possibility of staff having the knowledge to effectively support children's bespoke and unique needs.

Staff do not always receive regular supervision. When supervision does take place, staff are given targets to support their development so that they can become more skilled. The interim manager uses his supervision to discuss areas that require improvement and to share development ideas, to raise the standard of care that children receive.

The monitoring processes in place are not sufficient to scrutinise the care that children receive. The interim manager recognises this shortfall, together with some of the other issues raised. The interim manager has devised a suitable action plan to make improvements to the service.

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
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iv)(v))	16 August 2021
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— understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ii))	16 August 2021
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	14 July 2021

necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(vi))	
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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; 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)(c)(e)(h))	16 August 2021
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— any restriction, other than one imposed by a court or in accordance with regulation 22 (contact and access to communications), on— a child's contact with parents, relatives or friends. (Regulation 19 (1) (2)(c)(i))	14 July 2021
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. 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 (3)(d)) This specifically relates to documentary evidence, as far as is reasonably practicable, of the reason why previous employment involving work with children ended.	16 August 2021

The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	16 August 2021
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 effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; 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")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	16 August 2021

Recommendations

- The registered provider should ensure that the children's guide helps children to understand:
 - how they can access advocacy support or independent advocacy if eligible; and
 - how to contact the Office of the Children's Commissioner.
 ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.22)
- The registered provider should ensure that the arrangements for contact are included in the child's plan. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.15)
- The registered provider should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. ('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: 2522240

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Investing in Children CIC

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

Responsible individual: Julie Scurfield

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Paula Kelly, Social Care Inspector

Emma Ridley, Social Care Inspector

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