

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 inspectors spoke to two of the four children who live in the home.

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

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 October 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **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 provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 13 December 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/12/2021	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13/07/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
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: good

Children say that they feel safe and happy living in this home. One child said that they would give this home 'five stars' and that living in this home feels 'normal'.

Children who move into and out of the home are supported well by the staff. This includes staff facilitating family time at the home for one child, even though the child now lives elsewhere. The staff continue to maintain positive relationships with the children, even after they have moved on to their new homes. This provides children with an extended support network.

Children say that they feel listened to. Children attend weekly meetings where they share their views about living in the home. The manager and staff act on the requests of the children, such as allowing the children's friends to have sleepovers. This creates a sense of belonging for the children and gives the home a family feel.

Staff respect and respond well to the diverse needs of the children. Staff help the children to explore their identity safely through direct work, such as their sexuality. Staff attend specialist events with the children and access specialist support for them. This helps children to feel safe to express their individuality.

The staff support the children to attend school. Children's attendance has improved, and children are supported to sit exams. When children are unable to attend school, staff support them in the home with their learning. This supports the children to have consistency with their education. Children are also supported to secure employment. Staff support children with the interview process and with travelling to work.

Children are supported by staff to be healthy. When staff notice a decline in a child's mental health, they are quick to make specialist referrals and seek specialist advice. This includes the staff having access to a psychologist to inform their practice.

Children are supported to access a wide range of activities and experiences, such as trips abroad, going to concerts and attending festivals. This helps the children to develop their self-esteem and confidence. However, photo books reflecting these special moments are not consistently kept up to date for all of the children. This prevents some of the children from having memories kept of their experiences while living in the home.

Some areas of the home require repairs, such as the bathrooms, and some furniture needs replacing, such as in the living room and in one child's bedroom. In particular, the kitchen is showing significant signs of wear and tear. Furthermore, food is not labelled correctly in the fridge. This does not provide children with a safe home environment.

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

There is a dedicated team of core staff members. Staff have a detailed understanding of the risks the children face because they know the children well. This helps to keep the children safe.

Children's risk assessments and behaviour management plans do not identify all of the children's current issues, such as children harming themselves. These documents are not regularly reviewed and updated, and are not always signed and dated by staff. This does not provide reassurances that the staff have read and understand the child's plans.

When children make allegations, these are taken seriously and investigated. Children feel safe and listened to, as they are helped to understand the outcome of any investigation.

Consequences are rare. When they are used, they are necessary and restorative in nature. This helps the children to understand how their behaviours impact on themselves and others.

Searches of the children's bedrooms are infrequent and are effective in keeping children safe. However, children are not always informed about their rooms being searched. This oversight prevents the staff from having a conversation with the child about any potential risks, which may help to keep the child safe.

The children's privacy is not protected. Internal and external CCTV cameras are in the home. It is not clear why the cameras are in place, and the manager does not review the use of these monitoring systems to determine if they are necessary to safeguard the children. In addition, the provider does not have written consent from the children's placing local authorities to use this monitoring and recording equipment.

The main fire exit, which is also the front door, has been kept locked at night with a key when the children are in bed, which only the staff have access to. This was to try to keep one child safe by stopping them from leaving the home. However, this practice may have prevented children from leaving the home in an emergency and was not regularly reviewed or recorded as a form of restraint. The manager did not receive written consent from the children's placing local authorities to restrict access in this way.

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

The provider has recruited a new deputy manager and a manager. At the time of inspection, the home had been without a manager for eleven days.

The manager does not have effective monitoring and review systems in place. This means that the children's records and plans are not regularly reviewed. In addition, this oversight prevents the manager from ensuring that the children's records are accurate, and that the staff are correctly following the children's plans.

The manager has not kept important documents up to date, such as the home's health and safety risk assessment and location risk assessment. This prevents the manager from identifying, and then mitigating, any new risks that emerge because of the children's changing behaviours, such as ligature risks, and in the home's locality. Furthermore, the manager has failed to complete the six-month quality of care review and has failed to keep the home's statement of purpose up to date, for example it does not contain details about the staff team. The children's guide also contains outdated information, which may prevent the children from accessing the support that they may need.

The manager has not notified Ofsted of one serious incident. This oversight prevented Ofsted from being assured that all necessary actions were taken to safeguard a child.

The manager does not practise safer recruitment procedures. This includes failing to ensure that the large number of agency staff used are suitably qualified and experienced. There has also been a high turnover of newly recruited staff. This wider staffing difficulty disrupts the children's consistent care arrangements.

Leaders complete investigations following complaints and take the appropriate disciplinary action. However, the process put in place to stop further issues occurring has not been consistently followed.

Permanent staff members receive regular and reflective supervision. However, agency staff do not receive practice-related supervision. This oversight prevents the manager from ensuring that the agency staff are appropriately supported to care for the children well.

Permanent staff access regular training and all permanent staff have completed the provider's mandatory training courses. When additional training needs are identified, this training is arranged promptly and attended by all permanent staff members.

Team meetings are held regularly and they are well attended. This ensures that the staff have the opportunity to discuss the children and their needs. Guest speakers attend these meetings, which helps to improve the staff's knowledge and practice.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that all items of furniture, fixtures and fittings, including the kitchen, are repaired or replaced in a timely manner and are fit for purpose.	1 December 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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health; and that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(d)(e)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure that the fire exits are not locked with a key. The registered person	1 December 2022

must ensure that the staff comply with the health and safety legislation regarding food hygiene. The registered person must ensure that the health and safety assessments are completed in line with legislative requirements. The registered person must ensure that the child protection policies are regularly reviewed and updated, taking into particular account ligature and self-harm risks.	
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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and	1 December 2022

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h))	
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 16 (1) (3)(a)(b) (5))	1 December 2022
The registered person must ensure that— the privacy of children is appropriately protected; children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (1)(a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure that any restriction on a child's freedom of movement around the home by the locking of doors, is risk assessed and kept under regular review.	1 December 2022

The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; the child’s placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance; so far as reasonably practicable in the light of the child’s age and understanding, the child is informed in advance of the intention to do the monitoring or surveillance; and the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child’s need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d)) In particular, the registered person must know where the CCTV is located in the home. The registered person must know whether the CCTV is active. The registered person must know if any footage captured by CCTV is recorded and how it is stored. The registered person must assess whether the CCTV is necessary and, if so, keep it under review. The registered person must ensure that the children are aware of the use of CCTV. The registered person must obtain consent in writing to use CCTV from the child’s placing authority.	1 December 2022
The registered person must maintain records (“case records”) for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all of the records listed in schedule 3 are regularly reviewed and kept up to date. The registered person should ensure that the home’s policies should not contradict or conflict with the children’s risk assessments.	1 December 2022
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—	1 December 2022

an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b))	
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 quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. after completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report"). The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a))	1 December 2022
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1) (2)) In particular, the registered manager must consult with the relevant professionals in the wider community to inform the risk assessment.	1 December 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the staff understand the importance of carrying out life-story work or other direct work with the children. Life-story work should be kept up to date and treated with respect. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', pages 16, paragraph 3.14)
- The registered person should review and update the children's guide as necessary and make sure the children are given an explanation of any changes. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.23)
- The registered person should ensure that any restrictions of liberty of movement are recorded as restraint. In particular, the registered person should ensure that the locking of doors is recorded as a restraint. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.2)
- The registered person should ensure that the recruitment of staff safeguards the children and minimises the potential risks to them. In particular, the registered person should ensure that they are satisfied that there is a safer recruitment process in place in respect of agency staff who are employed to work in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure that systems are in place so that all staff receive regular supervision, and that they can reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. In particular, the registered person should ensure that they are satisfied about the arrangements for the supervision of agency staff. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

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

Julia Hagan, Social Care Inspector
Claire Webster, Social Care Inspector

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