

2529331

Registered provider: Assure Care Homes Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home cares for up to five children. The home's statement of purpose states that it provides care for children with learning disabilities, including children with autism spectrum disorder and other associated diagnoses.

The home has been without a registered manager since February 2021.

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 May 2022

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	inadequate
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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: 27 October 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/10/2021	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
19/08/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

Children enjoy living in this home. Staff provide child-centred care and help, which has a positive impact on their lives. However, shortfalls in recognising and addressing safeguarding risks have undermined the overall quality and experience of care for some of the children.

Staff support the children to pursue their interests, and they encourage new activities. Children participate in a range of positive experiences in the local and wider community. Recently, the staff helped one child achieve her dream of visiting Disneyland Paris. The staff recognise that by supporting the children to follow their dreams and passions, the children learn invaluable life skills such as overcoming barriers and developing confidence to achieve.

All children attend school or college. The staff ensure the children attend their educational placements each day and encourage them to try their best. There is a good range of books, games and arts and crafts materials available to encourage the children's learning and play at the home.

Children who are new to the home are welcomed sensitively and with good planning. Staff know the children well and are good at recognising their non-verbal cues that show their likes and dislikes. However, the environment in the home is not rich in the full range of the different communication models and aids available, such as photos and symbols. This means that for children who are non-verbal, their day-to-day choices are restricted.

Children make good progress. Two children, in the short time they have been at the home, have made significant strides in improving their sleep, diets and routines. However, the children's care plans and assessments are of variable quality, and some records are missing. Therefore, the staff do not have the most current information regarding children's current needs. This has the potential to hinder the children's development.

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

Risk assessments are weak or incomplete. They do not cover all relevant risks or provide sufficient detail about triggers and early warning signs alongside clearly set out actions to reduce risks. One child's missing-from-home profile contained contradictory guidance on the actions for staff to take in reporting them as missing to the police.

In practice, the staff know and understand the risks for the children. Staff spoken to were confident about what safeguarding action to take if they had a concern about a

child. However, the lack of consistency across the children's assessments and care planning records weakens the staff's ability to easily identify risks and respond appropriately and safely.

Staff work in partnership with health services to promote children's health and well-being. The staff know how to manage, administer and record medication appropriately. However, leaders have not ensured that all children have up-to-date, detailed healthcare plans that are reviewed regularly.

Staff recognise and celebrate the children's positive behaviours and achievements. Staff are usually effective at de-escalating the children's anxieties. The use of physical intervention is rare. However, when this has occurred, some of the records have not been signed by the managers within the required timeframes. The delay in timely scrutiny undermines the management oversight in ensuring safe practice.

During the inspection, inspectors found that the home's internal wireless broadband was not set up with an appropriate level of filtering to stop the children from seeing adult and inappropriate online content. This was rectified during the inspection.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There has been a significant period of instability in this home because of changes in the management arrangements. During this period, the responsible individual has provided consistency for the children and staff. However, her capacity to provide strong day-to-day oversight has been limited because of her other management responsibilities within the organisation.

A new manager has been appointed and had been in post for three weeks at the time of this inspection.

Since the last inspection, the home has moved to a new online recording system. Not all the staff are confident in using this system. Some records are incomplete or have not been transferred over. As a result, the monitoring and review systems to ensure improvements in the quality of care in the home are currently ineffective. Further training has been identified for the staff team.

In-house recruitment processes follow safer recruitment principles. Managers have improved their vetting of agency staff and generally use the same workers who know the children. This provides consistency for the children and helps the agency workers feel part of the team.

Managers have improved the quality of supervision records to better reflect performance management. Staff, including the night staff, said that they receive regular supervision that is helpful. There is good staff morale, and staff are positive about the support and training that is provided.

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 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; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(b)) This relates to the registered person ensuring that risk assessment planning takes account of risks outside of the home, such as transport and road safety arrangements where relevant. This also relates to the registered person ensuring that the home's internet access is monitored in a way that ensures a reasonable duty of care in providing online age-appropriate filtering and safeguarding.	10 July 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— promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—	10 July 2022

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(h)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(c))	10 July 2022
The registered person must ensure that— 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)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	10 July 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person must ensure that where there is a possibility that a child may go missing from home, their risk assessment should include a clear strategy to minimise this risk. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.24)
- The registered person should ensure that the home provides a communication-rich environment for children. Communication aids, such as symbols, photos, equipment and/or any necessary language support, should be readily available. This is to ensure that each child is provided with support (appropriate to their age and understanding) to communicate their views, wishes and feelings and

participate as fully as possible in all aspects of their care planning and daily care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.6)

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: 2529331

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Assure Care Homes Ltd

Registered provider address: Unit 4, Northbrook Industrial Estate, Hollybrook Road, Shirley, Southampton, Hampshire SO16 6PB

Responsible individual: Luencina Zankl

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Anne-Marie Davies, Social Care Inspector
Mark Dawkins, Social Care Inspector

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