

# 2545027

Registered provider: Discovered Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This three-bed home aims to provide specialist therapeutic residential placements for children with mental health issues and/or challenging behaviours involving risks to self and others.

**Inspection dates:** 30 to 31 December 2019

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,** taking into account **requires improvement to be 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 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:** not applicable. This is the home's first inspection.

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** not applicable

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## 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   |
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| <p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;</p> <p>encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;</p> <p>communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful;</p> <p>help each child to develop the understanding and skills to</p> | 28/02/2020 |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |            |
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| <p>recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship;</p> <p>strive to gain each child's respect and trust;</p> <p>understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children;</p> <p>are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same;</p> <p>de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children.</p> <p>(Regulation 11<br/>(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)(xi))</p> |            |
| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>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.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(b))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 28/02/2020 |
| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 28/02/2020 |

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.

(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f))

## Recommendations

- The registered person is responsible for ensuring that each child's day to day health and well-being needs are met. Staff should work to make the children's home an environment that supports children's physical, mental and emotional health, in line with the approach set out in the home's Statement of Purpose. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.3)
- The use of external agency staff can be a positive choice to complement the skills and experiences of the permanent workforce. Any external agency staff should meet the requirements in regulation 32(4) regarding mandatory qualifications and the registered person should consider their skills, qualifications and any induction necessary before they commence work in the home. The use of agency staff should be carefully monitored and reviewed to ensure children receive continuity of care. No more than half the staff on duty at any one time, by day or night at the home should be from an external agency. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.16 and 10.17)
- As set out in regulations 31-33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)  
In particular, ensure that these supervisory and performance management meetings occur at a frequency in line with the home's policies and procedures.

## Inspection judgements

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

One child has lived at the home since it opened in late September 2019. The child's presenting behaviours fit within the service that the organisation aims to offer. As agreed with the placing authority, staffing levels are maintained at 3:1 for the entire 24-hour period. Despite the high staffing ratio, inconsistencies in personnel, and their approach, means that they are only just developing a rapport with him.

The failure of staff to consistently use agreed behaviour management strategies means that he receives mixed messages. This enables him to play staff and managers off against each other, and hampers progress.

The child said, 'I want to move. I don't speak to staff, they are not trained for someone like me. This is not the right place for me.'

At present, the manager is assessing whether the home can meet his needs. In particular, staff have been unable to engage the child in education or with the specialist therapeutic services that the home offers.

The child's disrupted sleep pattern means that he is currently staying awake at night and sleeping for most of the day. Staff have failed to establish a routine that would enable him to positively engage in education or daytime activities.

Small examples of progress are evident, but it has taken staff a very long time to engage with the child. Staff consider his views and wishes, but have yet to positively manage situations when they cannot accede to the child's wishes.

Staff are endeavouring to reassure the child that when he moves on it will be in a planned way. This is to minimise his current anxieties about what the future holds for him.

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

Since moving to this home, the child has become increasingly unsettled. He has familiarised himself with the local area and made inappropriate acquaintances and friendships in the community. This has greatly increased the level of concern about his vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour.

The child goes missing from home regularly. More recently, this has not been recorded as a missing incident as staff follow him. The child is only reported as missing if they lose sight of him. However, there is concern that he and staff are at risk while they follow him into the town centre at night.

The child's vulnerability, coupled with a desire to be part of a gang culture, means that there is an increased potential for him to be groomed into criminal and/or sexual exploitation. There were also risks associated with staff transporting the child to family visits. These risks and vulnerabilities have been captured in the home's risk assessments and these assessments detail how these risk factors can be addressed. However, some assessments are not up to date. This prevents staff from working with up-to-date knowledge of risk and known behaviours.

Some of the child's behaviours have improved but others have become more worrying. On occasion, agency workers have not been fully onboard with the agreed behaviour management strategies when the child leaves the home without permission. This fails to safeguard the child or the staff. The manager has addressed this with the agency responsible for supplying the staff. Agency, bank and full-time staff do shadow shifts in the home before commencing work. This is designed to assist them with having a good understanding of the expected duties to be carried out on shift. It also ensures that, wherever possible, the child is not put to bed or woken up by people unfamiliar to him.

Staff training is monitored and covers a range of relevant topics to ensure that staff are aware of current issues and approaches. However, the home has a number of staff who are new to this type of work, setting or level of need. This means that staffing at the home is not consistent with the highly qualified staff team that is described within the home's statement of purpose.

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

The manager has several years of experience in residential care and has been involved with the home since its inception. Her vision for the home is in its infancy. She is aware of the teething problems that occur when setting up a new home and recognises that the newly formed staff team is still developing.

The child's highly complex needs have challenged the team. She recognises that this may not be the right place for him, at this time, but is committed to completing his 90-day assessment period.

A combination of staff members' personal circumstances, illness and recruitment issues have meant that general oversight of recording and staff debriefings have lapsed. It has also led to staff receiving infrequent formal supervision. This prevents them from having the individual focused time that they require to address, discuss or reflect on their practice. This is particularly important for those who are new to this type of work.

Staffing ratios are high and this has resulted in an increased use of agency staff. Where possible, the manager uses known workers. On occasions, the number of agency staff on shift has exceeded the permissible 50%. This, as already described, means that there are inconsistencies in the quality of care provided.

The location risk assessment is detailed but would benefit from more specific details

about how identified risks, such as a busy main road, would be minimised.

Positive partnership working is being established, with new and improving relationships with families and external agencies.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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:** 2545027

**Provision sub-type:** children's home

**Registered provider:** Discovered Limited

**Registered provider address:** 4-4a Blackburn Road, Accrington, Lancashire BB5 1HD

**Responsible individual:** Thomas Mayer

**Registered manager:** Michelle Jackson

## Inspector

Sonia Hay, Social Care Inspector



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