

2547560

Registered provider: Ownlife Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to three children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager is registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 January 2024

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: 22 February 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/02/2023	Full	Good
21/04/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the home. Since the previous inspection, one child has moved out to live with a family member.

Staff ensure that communal areas of the home are well furnished and maintained. In contrast, some children's rooms are untidy, with rubbish on the floor and areas of damage. In addition, one en-suite bathroom was dirty. Staff recognise that some children have specific needs relating to their rooms, but they have not been able to make a difference to this to enable children to sleep in clean, tidy conditions.

Children are registered with education providers. However, children are not making demonstrable progress with their learning. Children have fluctuating attendance, and the manager acknowledged during the inspection that one child's attendance had declined. Another child has not attended school since an incident that took place outside of school. Leaders and managers have had multiagency discussions to help the child reintegrate and have offered to escort the child to school. While there are continued efforts to support children's education, this is not yet helping children to attend school regularly and progress is limited.

Children have varying relationships with staff and with each other. Staff respect children's culture and cook meals that reflect this, which children appreciate. Some children have been observed to be having positive interactions with staff. As a result of staff efforts, some children feel comfortable sharing their views, wishes and feelings.

Managers do not always escalate requests for children's statutory plans and information effectively. As a result, some home plans relating to care, health and education are not up to date. In addition, children's risk assessments do not reflect all risks to children or their level of need. This lack of attention to key documents means that staff do not have the most up-to-date information to help them support children. Despite this, children are making some progress in some areas, but this is not consistent. The manager understands these concerns and has plans to make the necessary changes.

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

Children sometimes go missing from the home. When they return, staff discuss the missing incident and why this is a cause for concern. In addition, when social workers complete return home interviews, the outcome of these is not shared with staff, which hinders how children are protected. Managers have not escalated this concern effectively to ensure that they have the information to guide how they support children.

Risk assessments are not consistently updated to reflect current risks. For example, despite one child going missing from home frequently, he is deemed to be at low risk of being missing. In addition, one child has not lived in the home for four months, and staff have been unable to support him to return. While he has been away from the home, he has been involved in two incidents with the police. There has been discussion about this home being suitable for this child.

Staff complete records of incidents, and follow-up discussions take place with children. The home is currently updating their documents so that more detailed recording can take place.

The use of monitoring and surveillance in the home is not proportionate. Leaders have placed CCTV on the landing, but the rationale for this is not clear. These measures place unnecessary restrictions on children's privacy.

Senior leaders ensure that the system for recruitment is robust. As a result, leaders are assured that only properly vetted staff care for children.

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

Managers' monitoring systems are not effective in all areas. For example, children's educational progress has not been challenged enough so that they have the best chance for the future. In addition, the system to oversee children's bedrooms has not led to better conditions for children to sleep in.

The registered manager has not completed the regular review of the quality of care that children receive. This highlights shortfalls in the leaders' systems for monitoring care and noting where additional support for children is needed.

Managers and leaders have noted that the external support from an independent visitor is not providing sufficient challenge to the home to support their improvement. Managers and leaders have some plans to address this, but as yet these changes are not in place.

Staff feel supported by managers and leaders through regular supervision. Managers have put in place training that is specific to children, and staff are completing this. Staff enjoy working as a team and learning from each other.

External professionals speak highly of staff and how they care for children. Despite this positive feedback, external professionals also raised that children's school attendance needs to improve and information could be shared more quickly. Recommendations from previous inspections relating to the condition of the children's rooms and return home interviews have not been fully met and are restated.

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, The 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
When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44 (2)(a)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)) In particular, the registered manager should ensure that the independent person provides their reports to the home without delay and challenge the quality of reports to help the home develop and improve.	1 April 2024
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans;	1 April 2024

seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; and if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c)) In particular, the registered manager must escalate concerns to placing authorities to ensure that they have up-to-date plans. In addition, the registered manager must ensure they receive information from return home interviews.	
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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and 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)(iii)(vi)(b)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure that children's risk assessments and behaviour plans are up to date and that staff understand the factors that contribute to children being missing from the home so they can reduce this behaviour.	1 April 2024
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which—	1 April 2024

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 manager must ensure that children's records are up to date and accurate.	
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; support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement; and help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(x))	1 April 2024

In particular, the registered manager must support children to attend education and support children's progress in their learning.	
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure that the use of CCTV in the home does not unnecessarily impact on children's privacy.	1 April 2024

Recommendations

- The registered manager should ensure that there are processes in place to make sure that care is reviewed at least once every six months and that this review is provided to Ofsted and others noted in regulation as required. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.3)
- The registered person must ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. This recommendation was raised at the last inspection and is restated. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.3)
- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children and is a homely, domestic environment. In particular, ensure that all children's bedrooms are kept clean and tidy. This recommendation was raised at the last inspection and is restated. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Information about this inspection

The inspector has 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: 2547560

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Ownlife Limited

Registered provider address: Legion House, 75 Lower Road, Kenley CR8 5NH

Responsible individual: David Hastings

Registered manager: Gamila Higgins

Inspector

Chelsea Agyeman, Social Care Inspector

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