

2547967

Registered provider: Empower Residential Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The statement of purpose states that the home can provide care for two children who may have social and emotional needs or learning disabilities. At the time of this inspection, one child was living in the home.

The post of registered manager has been vacant since November 2021. The responsible individual is closely overseeing the setting.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 November 2022

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 **inadequate**

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 July 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: A monitoring visit was completed in September 2022. That visit was to check how the home was dealing with the concerns found at the full inspection in July 2022 when the home was judged to be inadequate.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/07/2022	Full	Inadequate
11/01/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Since the last inspection, the same child continues to live at this home. He is very positive about the adults who care for him and is relaxed and comfortable in his living environment. Interactions observed between the adults and the child are warm, supportive and encouraging.

Daily records are well maintained and provide details about the child's experiences in the home. He continues to engage well in his education programme, enjoys a wide range of activities, and eats a healthy and nutritious diet.

The child's healthcare needs are met well. The team works closely with a wide range of healthcare professionals. This is helping the team to understand and respond effectively to the child's current changing needs.

In the last two months, behavioural incidents have increased. The duration and intensity of these incidents have been of a significant concern. One incident involved police intervention, damage to the property and injury to staff. In response, leaders and managers have increased staffing levels and reintroduced restrictions detailed in the child's deprivation of liberty order. Leaders and managers have recognised that they cannot meet the child's changing complex needs. They have made a carefully considered decision to end the child's placement in this home.

Leaders and managers have identified that a contributing factor for this escalation in incidents is a result of staff leaving and behaviour management strategies not being implemented or consistently maintained. This was also raised as a concern by a parent and two professionals. In response, leaders and managers have improved management oversight and reviewed the staffing rotas. At this inspection, Ofsted found that the continuity of care has improved, and incidents are gradually reducing.

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

In the main, safeguarding procedures are followed when an allegation has been made. Records relating to two safeguarding concerns managed by the home's previous interim manager have not been well maintained. As a result, the current interim manager could not confirm some safeguarding actions. For example, when interviews were completed, the interim manager could not confirm if the local authority designated officer had been notified, or confirm the outcome of internal investigations. Safeguarding concerns directly managed by the new interim manager have followed safeguarding procedures appropriately.

Overall, incident records have improved, but more improvement remains. Some records are too descriptive. As a result, specific information about what happened, why and the outcome is lost and makes monitoring of these incidents harder.

Improved opportunities have been introduced to help staff to talk about how they felt during and after incidents. Discussions now help staff to identify why the child's anxiety increased and what could have been done to help him communicate his feelings in a different way. Leaders and managers recognise that further work is required to help staff consider the impact on the child when he has been held and when the police have been involved.

Overall, the team has a good understanding of risk. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated. Despite this, the documents are extensive and include an ongoing chronology of incidents that have taken place. This detracts away from providing new and inexperienced staff with clear and concise information on how to identify and mitigate risks.

Staff complete body maps daily. Records do not consistently detail what actions have been taken when an unexplained injury has been identified.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Since the previous full inspection, the interim manager has left, and a new interim manager has been appointed. The new manager is being supported by the responsible individual. Attempts have been made to recruit to this post permanently; however, these have not been successful. More action is needed to recruit a new manager.

Since the last inspection, improvements have been made to the management oversight of the operation of this home. Despite this, weaknesses remain in the management monitoring of records, specifically risk assessments, body maps and behaviour management reports completed by staff. To date, these deficiencies have not had a direct impact on the child but have the potential to do so if not rectified.

Leaders and managers recognise the need to improve continuity of care for the child. Four members of staff have successfully passed their probation. The interim manager and newly appointed deputy manager work alternative evenings and weekends providing the new staff with the guidance and support they need. Staff confirmed that the new managers are helping them to develop their confidence and skills. Morale within the team has improved significantly.

The responsible individual and interim manager recognise the home's strengths and most of the weaknesses. They have documented in the home's improvement plan the need to recruit a suitable and experienced manager and the need to improve staff retention.

Since the last full inspection, leaders and managers have provided staff with bespoke training opportunities specifically focused on meeting the child's needs.

Additional training courses have been identified and booked. A new induction programme has been introduced. This programme will provide new employees an opportunity to review the home's policies and complete basic mandatory training. These improvements are in their infancy and have not been tested out for their effectiveness.

Bi-monthly team meetings are providing staff with improved opportunities to reflect as a team, learn from each other and to identify strategies that will support the child. The staff are being encouraged to use their personal skills and experiences to improve the quality of care and support the child is receiving. All staff are now receiving regular formal supervisions, and the records of these meetings reflect the discussions held.

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 staff— protect and promote each child's welfare; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect; make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(ii)(iv)(v)(ix)) This directly relates to leaders and managers ensuring that the staff team is sufficiently in numbers and that they have the skills and experience necessary to understand and support children's needs and promote their welfare effectively.	30 December 2022
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.	30 December 2022

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)) Specifically, ensure that child protection records are complete and that queries arising from body maps are actioned and documented.	
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 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 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;	30 December 2022

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— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and 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)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(ii)(h)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that the monitoring of care is effective in safeguarding children and promoting their well-being.	
The registered person must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home. (Regulation 27 (1)(a))	30 December 2022

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 61, 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: 2547967

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Empower Residential Limited

Registered provider address: Unit 2 Prockters Farm Offices, West Monkton, Taunton, Somerset TA2 8QN

Responsible individual: Jupiter McVeigh

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sharron Escott, Social Care Inspector

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