

2547967

Registered provider: Empower Support Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned and operated by a private provider. The home is registered to care for two children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties or learning disabilities.

The post of registered manager has been vacant since November 2021. The newly appointed manager has advised the inspector that they are applying to register with Ofsted.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 16 and 17 December 2020 to undertake an assurance visit. This report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 January 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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Not previously inspected		
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Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of the inspection, one child was living at the home. He has been living here for over two years. The child told the inspector that he is happy living here and that he likes the staff. He said that he feels safe. The inspector observed warm, caring and supportive interactions between the staff and the child. Staff place the child's needs at the centre of their practice.

Staff support the child to continue to enjoy his hobbies and interests, which are of significant importance to him. With great enthusiasm and pride, the child showed the inspector his collections of bottles. Staff encourage the child to develop relationships with children of his own age. However, the child has not made any friendships with children outside school. Staff need to look at additional ways to support the child's social development.

The home is well decorated and homely. Recently, the child has moved bedrooms. He said that he loves his new bedroom and is sleeping much better. On occasions, staff 'search' his bedroom to make sure the environment is safe. However, staff are not provided with clear guidance as to what constitutes the need for this practice.

The child receives a bespoke education package. Staff support and encourage him to attend and help him to make progress. When there are challenges to the child's education needs being met, managers work in partnership with other professionals to improve his outcomes.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Staff help the child to develop positive behaviour. Feedback from staff and professionals indicates that he is developing in maturity. In addition, he is beginning to recognise his feelings and express them better. The inspector observed staff supporting the child to manage his emotions and feelings effectively.

Staff have a good awareness of the child's risks and are guided by detailed risk assessments, behaviour-support plans and intervention plans. These are regularly reviewed and updated.

Staff complete detailed records in relation to incidents. Leaders and managers scrutinise these records effectively to look for trends and triggers. In addition, leaders and managers ensure that staff reflect on their practice to ascertain whether the incident could have been managed differently. However, the language used in some records to describe the child's behaviours is institutionalised and unclear.

Physical intervention is rare and only used as a last resort to keep the child and staff safe. However, discussions with children following the use of an intervention are not always conducted. Leaders and managers provide the placing authority with incident and physical intervention reports for their information and scrutiny.

Staff demonstrate a good awareness of safeguarding protocols. Since the assurance visit in December 2020, no referrals have been made to the designated officer or to children's social care.

Leaders and managers ensure that staff recruitment is effective and safe, to safeguard children. In addition, managers have conducted a detailed and effective risk assessment of the location of the children's home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager left the home in November 2021. A new manager has been appointed and informed the inspector that she is in the process of applying to register with Ofsted.

The home is well managed, and leaders and managers have a good awareness of the strengths and needs of the provision. The manager ensures that the home's development plan is regularly updated and that it clearly identifies areas for improvement. In addition, the manager responds effectively to recommendations made by the independent visitor.

Staff speak highly of the support and guidance that they receive. The manager ensures that staff receive regular and effective supervision. Staff regularly reflect on their practice. When needed, the manager ensures that any shortfalls in staff performance are addressed.

Leaders and managers ensure that staff receive specific training to enhance their awareness, understanding and skills to meet the needs of the child. As well as mandatory training, staff have recently received training around autism spectrum and therapeutic parenting. Staff said that this training has been helpful and has improved their practice.

Feedback from the child's social worker and other professionals about the quality of care is extremely positive. The social worker said that the communication and partnership working with the staff are very good, which results in positive outcomes for the child.

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 registered person must ensure that— 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(c))	28 February 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff are provided with clear guidance regarding the reasons for children's bedrooms to be searched. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.20)
- The registered person should ensure that staff continue to encourage children to participate in activities in the community and in clubs. In particular, help children to meet other children outside the school environment. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.5)
- 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 Support Services Limited

Registered provider address: Unit 2, Prockters Farm, Empower Support Services, West Monkton, Somerset TA2 8QN

Responsible individual: Jupiter McVeigh

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

David Kidner, Social Care Inspector

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