

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 manager currently in day-to-day charge of the home has submitted an application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 July 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean the care and experiences of the child are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 11 January 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/01/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

The child living at this home is not supported well enough to achieve positive outcomes because management oversight of the operation of the home is poor. The manager does not fully understand her role and responsibilities relating to the management of allegations.

The frequent changes in the staff team have had a negative impact on the child's ability to build trusting relationships with staff. Significant numbers of staff have recently left the home, which means that 80% of staff working with the child are new. Several of the new staff have no previous residential childcare experience. Staff do not know the child well and they do not yet have the skills and experience to meet and respond to his needs effectively.

The current staff members have not been provided with sufficient support or direction to enable them to meet the child's complex needs. In recent months, there has been an increase in the number of incidents. Staff are not always able to manage the child's complex behaviours effectively. At times, they have managed incidents by using physical intervention and, on one occasion, a member of the public called the police. The child was subsequently placed in handcuffs as staff were not able to manage his increased anxiety.

The child's bespoke education programme means his educational needs are creatively met. The child told the inspector he likes his tutors. His attendance and engagement with education are good.

The house is well maintained and homely. The child has been involved in choosing furnishings for his bedroom and growing fruit and vegetables in the garden.

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

Allegations management processes are not always followed. The manager's knowledge and understanding of these necessary safeguarding processes are weak.

The manager has failed to follow safeguarding procedures in relation to referring poor staff practice to the local authority designated officer (LADO) and notifying Ofsted. The manager failed to report the concerns to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required. When speaking to the inspector, the manager's knowledge in this area was limited.

Safeguarding and incident records are not well maintained or comprehensively recorded. A chronology of actions taken in response to the concerns is not always kept.

The child does not have trust and confidence in some of the adults who are caring for him. Incidents have increased, resulting in staff needing to use physical intervention to manage risk. Following incidents, the manager provides the staff and child with an opportunity to discuss the incident. However, records of these discussions are limited and do not confirm if the manager has asked the child for his views about being held or if staff have been supported to reflect on their practice or consider lessons learned.

Since the last inspection, in January 2022, 10 new staff have been recruited. Five of these new staff no longer work at the home. Exit interviews are completed with staff, however, the information gained does not inform or improve staff retention. As a result, recruitment is ongoing. The recruitment of staff follows appropriate safer recruitment procedures and recruitment records are generally well maintained. Despite this, interview notes do not detail why managers have decided that the candidate is suitable or if they have the skills and experience to meet the complex needs of the child they will be caring for.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Since the last inspection, a new manager has taken up the post. She has applied to register with Ofsted. The manager's safeguarding knowledge and her oversight of the quality of care that the child receives are not sufficiently well developed.

New staff have not been given the direction they need by the manager or through effective care planning to respond positively to the child's complex needs. Management oversight of significant incidents is weak. Staff debriefs do not provide staff with the opportunity to reflect on their practice or explore alternative behaviour management approaches.

Team meetings take place regularly, however, in recent months, staff attendance has been identified by the manager as a concern. Records of these meetings are incomplete; they do not detail discussions held or actions agreed and therefore limit their usefulness in informing staff who did not attend the meeting in person.

Record-keeping is weak. Some progress has been made to ensure that most of the records completed by staff are now held electronically. However, the content of written reports is overly descriptive, frequently incomplete, or factually inaccurate. The manager's monitoring has failed to identify or rectify these errors.

Independent and internal monitoring is ineffective. The lack of effective oversight and challenge by leaders and managers results in systems and practices that do not ensure or promote positive outcomes for the child.

All staff are compliant with basic mandatory and specialist training. Despite this, the provider's training is not effective. Staff do not apply their learning in practice. The staff team's understanding of their roles and responsibilities is weak.

The home's development plan, which details how regulatory requirements will be met, is regularly reviewed. However, this plan lacks aspiration about how to enhance the child's opportunities and experiences.

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 skilled and experienced to understand and support children's needs and promote their welfare effectively.	14 September 2022
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—	14 September 2022

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))	
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; 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—	14 September 2022

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 recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b)) This specifically relates to the provider ensuring that staff who care for the child are experienced and skilled to meet the child's needs. The registered person must ensure information gathered in exit interviews is used to help improve staff retention.	14 September 2022
The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular— provide for the prompt referral of an allegation about current or ongoing abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the home is located. (Regulation 34 (2)(b)) This specifically relates to the provider ensuring prompt referral of safeguarding concerns and allegations to the LADO.	
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in	14 September 2022

relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35 (1)(b) (3)(a)(v)(vii)) This refers specifically to the registered person ensuring that discussions held with staff and the child following incidents provide them with an opportunity to reflect on their actions, explore how the child felt about being held and consider alternative behaviour management approaches.	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that a record of supervision provides evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with regulation. In particular, ensure that formal supervisions and team meetings provide staff members with the opportunity to reflect on their practice individually and as a team. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)
- 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)
- The registered person should ensure that best use of information from independent and internal monitoring is made, to ensure continuous improvement. This particularly refers to ensuring that the written development plan is formalised to include ideas that the management team has to improve the quality of care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

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: Empower Support Services, Prockters Farm, West Monkton, Taunton TA2 8QN

Responsible individual: Jupiter McVeigh

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sharron Escott, Social Care Inspector

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