

2548260

Registered provider: Safe Places For Children Uk

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private organisation. The home provides care for up to three children. The home's statement of purpose states that staff will provide a high level of quality care by providing a warm, homely environment where children will feel safe, secure and, most importantly, valued.

Inspection date: 25 October 2022

Date of last inspection: 27 June 2022

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At these inspections, the inspector(s) evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The care of children

Since the last full inspection in June 2022, one child has been discharged from the home. At the time of this inspection, one child was living at the home.

The home has experienced a period of significant disruption. This has resulted in children being cared for by a number of unfamiliar staff, and has had a negative effect on the consistency of care provided to the children living in the home.

Relationships between the children and the staff are, at times, volatile. This is because the children have experienced a range of staff changes and have not formed trusting and strong bonds with permanent staff. A child said, 'This is just a home to me, somewhere to be so I can be close to my family.'

Education attendance and attainment is poor. Children do not attend their planned reduced timetable on a regular basis. This has resulted in the children having minimal investment in their educational journey. The staff team continues to encourage and incentivise educational attendance, without consistent success.

Children who require supervised interaction with their family members regularly visit them without supervision. This is because the home is located close to family members' homes. Staff take suitable action to return the child to the home and highlight these concerns to the placing authority.

Consultation with children takes place regularly. Children engage in key-work sessions and children's meetings, and have access to an independent advocate. Children help to plan the weekly activities and menus, and are supported to individualise their bedrooms. At the time of this inspection, everyone had worked together to decorate the home ready for Halloween.

The children are encouraged and supported to attend a variety of recreational activities, including trips to theme parks, laser quest, bowling, restaurants and the cinema. Furthermore, the children have access to a large park in which the home is situated.

The safety of children

Children's safety is compromised because of the location of the property. The children's home is based in a large unlit public park. During the summer months, the home experienced large groups of youths gathering around the property, disruptive

behaviour, people under the influence of alcohol and/or illicit substances, and activities of a sexual nature occurring nearby the property.

Groups of youths, known by one child who is resident in the home, congregate around the property. This has led to the children leaving the property and becoming involved with the group and the behaviours they exhibit. When the children leave the property, staff struggle to locate them in the park or neighbouring alleys due to the areas being unlit. This has resulted in them being reported as absent from the home.

The staff team liaised with the police to disperse groups of youths from around the property. This has been somewhat successful.

Plans to manage children's risks are not regularly updated to include the agreed strategies to manage challenging or disruptive behaviour. This results in children not understanding the home's boundaries because staff do not consistently implement them. When children are challenged by unfamiliar staff, this has resulted in an increase in negative behaviours.

Assessments that consider the ability of children to live together safely do not consider the known risks for a child already placed, such as jealousy and attachment concerns. Therefore, care being provided by unknown staff, coupled with the introduction of a new resident, exacerbated these risks, which resulted in an escalation of challenging behaviours. A staff member said, 'All the changes were difficult for the staff team, so it would have been very difficult for the children.'

The home has seen an increase in critical incidents during the period between July 2022 and the beginning of September 2022, coinciding with the admission of a second child, a depleted staff team and the summer holidays.

Incidents of children being missing or absent from care increased during the summer period. Staff follow missing-from-care protocols, and this includes searching for children, contacting friends and relatives, and filing a missing-from-care report. Overall, the staff have been successful in locating and returning children safely to the home. However, due to the location of the property, there are occasions when children are absent in the park and are unable to be located quickly due to a lack of lighting around the park.

The children's home has experienced a lack of consistent staffing, which has negatively affected the development of children's relationships with the staff. As a result, children's behaviours escalate. Behaviour-management methods fail to address the behaviours that children display. Therefore, children are not offered the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour or work with known staff to develop ways of managing their own emotions.

The home discharged a child at the beginning of September. Since this time, the home has seen a significant decrease in risk-taking behaviours, including anger and

aggression. A successful recruitment drive has resulted in several new staff being employed to the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

The registered manager is currently on maternity leave but will not be returning to manage the home. A new manager has been appointed and is preparing to make an application for registration with Ofsted.

Since the last inspection in June 2022, several staff have left their employment with the organisation. This resulted in children being cared for by unknown staff from across the organisation.

A successful recruitment drive has resulted in new staff being appointed to work at this home. The child in placement is starting to form relationships with the staff and said, 'I like the younger staff, they understand me better than the older ones.'

Since the period of significant disruption, the new manager has provided staff with the opportunity to access counselling. She said, 'I am aware that this will have been incredibly difficult for staff, and we want them to have an opportunity to share those feelings with someone independent of the company.'

Some repairs to the home have been completed, such as redecorating and replacing broken furnishings. However, repairs to broken bathroom tiles have not yet been addressed. In addition, the bedroom for a third child is incomplete and currently not available for use by a child.

The location of the children's home remains a concern. Staff state that they do not feel safe due to the concerns identified at this inspection, and managing the children in this location has proved difficult. The new manager recognises these concerns and has stated that this will be raised with the owners of the property.

Staff have received refresher training. Additional training in matters such as the role of the designated officer and the handling of complaints is scheduled in the coming weeks.

The new manager is visible in the property three times per week. She has commenced a review of the work being undertaken with the child in placement and is now working with staff to ensure that plans are followed and adhered to.

Three requirements were made at the last inspection in relation to regulation 11, the positive relationship standard, regulation 12, the protection of children standard, and regulation 39, complaints and representation. Although an action plan to resolve these shortfalls was submitted to Ofsted, improvements have not been sustained and therefore these requirements are restated.

In addition, three requirements are made in relation to regulation 13, the leadership and management standard, regulation 31, the employment of temporary staff standard, and regulation 6, the premises used for the children's home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/06/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
28/09/2021	Full	Inadequate

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 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— understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v)(vii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff understand what procedures to follow when a child makes a complaint or allegation against a member of staff. Also, that staff recordings with regards to incidents are clear and unambiguous. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	25 November 2022
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcomes of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (3)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	25 November 2022
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— an understanding about acceptable behaviour.	25 November 2022

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— 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. (Regulation 11 (1)(b) (2)(a)(v)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that children are not unduly affected by each other and that individualised routines are firmly established for each child. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
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 aspire 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'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; 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)(e)(f)(h))	25 November 2022

The registered person must ensure that the employment of any person on a temporary basis at the children's home does not prevent children from receiving such continuity of care as is reasonable to meet their needs. (Regulation 31 (1))	25 November 2022
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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of the child; and enable the child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii)) In particular, the registered person must consider the impact of the location of the home, with regard to children's safety and privacy.	25 November 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that there is clarity and a shared understanding with the designated officer of how concerns regarding staff conduct are to be managed. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.19)
- The registered person should ensure that they have fully considered the impact that any child placed will have on existing children placed and vice versa. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The registered person should ensure that there is prompt and professional repair to the home, such as the tiles in the children's bathroom and privacy screens on windows. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

- The registered person should ensure that staff complete training in substance misuse and sensory needs of children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2548260

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Safe Places For Children UK

Registered provider address: First Floor, Triad House, Mountbatten Court,
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Responsible individual: Jamie Joinson

Registered manager: Jodie Morris

Inspector

Maria McGranaghan, Social Care Inspector

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