

2552727

Registered provider: Care Focus Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is one of a group run by an independent provider. The home specialises in the care of up to four girls aged from 10 to 17 who have experienced trauma and who often have complex social backgrounds and show through behaviour that they experience significant emotional difficulties.

The manager has been in post since the home opened and registered with Ofsted in August 2019.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 8 and 9 December 2020 for an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 September 2021

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 **outstanding**

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

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff provide a kind and nurturing environment in which children are supported to thrive. Structured daily routines enable children to enjoy a sense of stability. Staff follow the settling routines that children have chosen for bedtime. These help children to relax and get the rest that they need. As a result, children are up and ready for learning each day.

Children make good progress with education. Children who were not engaging in education now have high levels of attendance and engage well in lessons. Additional tutoring is provided to ensure that children have the support they need to study a range of GCSEs and other education programmes. Staff enrich children's learning by celebrating topical days, such as International Women's Day, and by placing an emphasis on children reading for fun.

Staff provide excellent support to help children become more independent. They support children on a structured pathway programme that enables them to take increasing responsibility for their own care and to build up unsupervised time away from the home. One child secured an apprenticeship with a prestigious company. Staff identified and delivered the individualised support that this child needed to cope with the competitive interview process.

Staff have strong positive regard for the children. Children are supported to explore their culture and identity and to feel proud of who they are. Records for children contain praise, celebrate success and thank children for their contributions to the day. This underpins the positive relationships that staff have built with children and helps to improve children's sense of self-worth.

Staff offer sensitive and well-planned support around bereavement. This includes celebrations and remembrance activities, which help children to process their feelings and emotions.

Some children have self-harming behaviours. Staff undertake relevant training to help them to feel confident in responding to incidents of self-harm. Children said that staff help them at these times. Staff provide a high level of emotional support and offer children alternative ways of communicating if they are feeling low and need to talk.

Staff are sensitive to the relationships that children have with their families. They support children to spend time with family members at the home. Family visits often include children's pets. Children said that these visits are important to them.

Staff ensure that children make good memories, which are captured in scrapbooks and albums. They have organised festivals, outdoor cinema events and Christmas

markets for children to enjoy at the home. They also support the children with activities of their individual choice such as roller skating, stage school and horse riding.

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

Staff keep children safe and provide them with the knowledge of how to improve their own safety. Children who were previously going missing from home do not leave this home without permission. The high level of supervision of children's use of the internet reduces their vulnerability to online abuse. Other incidents are rare and are managed well by the staff.

Staff support children to identify constructive, positive ways to fill their time without use of their electronic devices. These include making music, playing games and baking. Children researched and raised money for charities through activities such as bake sales. This promoted their pride, self-esteem and sense of achievement.

Key working is creative and targeted to each child's specific needs. Staff engage children in different ways to learn about safety issues, including safe relationships and safe use of social media. This equips children with the understanding that they need as they work towards having time away from the home and accessing the internet unsupervised.

Staff are confident in explaining their role in keeping children safe. They have the skills and sensitivity to ensure that children are provided with care and comfort when disclosing historic experiences. Staff escalate safeguarding concerns to the relevant agencies when required.

Staff apply consistent boundaries which are understood by the children. Children enjoy positive and energetic interactions with staff, which are based on mutual respect.

Risk assessments are well detailed and identify presenting risks for individual children. However, one child's risk assessment does not include clear guidance for staff in relation to safer caring practices when providing physical affection. Another risk assessment does not reflect the actions that staff said they would take if a child was to leave the house without permission.

There were gaps in medication recording for one child. It was not clear if this child's medication had been refused or forgotten on five occasions. Such errors could lead to children not receiving the medical treatment they have been prescribed. The manager implemented an improved auditing system when this error was highlighted during the inspection.

Potential staff's skills and abilities are explored through a detailed values-based recruitment process. New staff are subject to safer recruitment checks. However, the reasons for leaving previous care roles were not verified for one member of staff. This increases the risk of unsuitable individuals being employed at the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The child-centred manager leads a culture of positivity, respect and fun. She goes above and beyond expectations to ensure that children and staff feel safe and valued.

The manager has an impressive knowledge of the children's needs and the plans to help them progress. She has established and implemented thoughtful plans for children moving into and out of the home. When children move into the home in emergency situations, the manager works well with parents and children to reduce their anxiety.

Children feel able to confide in the manager. The manager spends quality time with children to nurture these relationships. She has received numerous messages from children thanking her for the self-belief that she has given them. One child said that the manager makes them feel good about themselves. Another child, who has moved on from the home, remains in contact with the manager. This is testament to the strength of the relationship that they have built.

The manager maintains strong and effective oversight of the day-to-day running of the home. She has a detailed knowledge of any incidents that occur with children. She leads reflective discussions with children and staff to review and improve practice.

The manager is an effective advocate for the children. She has secured the mental health services that children need. This ensures that children have access to the right support to process past trauma and to meet their individual mental health needs.

The manager has embedded quality assurance systems that inform her understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. These include regular consultation with children. Children's views help inform development plans. The manager is appropriately qualified. She is focused on her professional development and continues to access training and enhance her knowledge to inform and continually improve the care for children.

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 make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular the registered person must ensure that— a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(c)) In particular, keep a record when a child has refused medication so that any gaps in administration can be identified and acted on if required.	25 October 2021
The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (2)(a)(b) (3)(d)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that if a person has previously worked in a position involving work with children or vulnerable adults, verification so far as reasonably practicable of the reason why the employment or position ended is obtained.	25 October 2021

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that risk assessments are clear and consistently provide staff with clarity regarding the arrangements in place to protect children and the steps they must take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. In particular: risk assessments should contain clear guidance for staff to follow to achieve the right balance between providing the physical affection that children need and maintaining professional boundaries; and more detailed guidance on the actions that staff should take if children attempt to leave the property in line with the home's own missing protocol. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

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: 2552727

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care Focus Limited

Registered provider address: 2nd Floor, 168 Shoreditch High Street, London E1 6RA

Responsible individual: Jean Lloyd

Registered manager: Chelsea Shirmer

Inspectors

Paula Edwards, Social Care Inspector
Jamie Cousins, Social Care Inspector

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