

2561726

Registered provider: Vcare - 24 Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private organisation. It is a solo placement for one child who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 12 May 2022 and has the required qualification.

At the time of the inspection, no children were living in the home.

Inspection dates: 30 and 31 August 2023

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **requires improvement to be 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: 2 August 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/08/2022	Full	Good
13/12/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

No children were living in the home at the time of this inspection, so interactions between children and staff were not observed. Documents and records since the last inspection were reviewed to evaluate children's experiences and progress. In addition, staff, professionals, families and children who had previously lived in the home were consulted.

Detailed and thorough assessments are completed by the registered manager before children move into the home. This ensures that staff have the relevant skills to meet each child's needs. There has been an increase in the number of children moving into and out of the home since the last inspection. This is not part of a pattern, with each placement having its own unique set of circumstances.

When children move into the home, staff make consistent efforts to establish a trusted relationship with each child. Children are encouraged to personalise their bedroom space, which helps them settle in. Staff make consistent efforts to familiarise themselves with children's preferences. Children choose meals and activities, which staff then provide. This supports children to keep a sense of their own identity and validates their choices.

Staff recognise the importance of children's education. However, some children's school placements are arranged too slowly. During interim periods, staff provide alternative informal learning opportunities, such as excursions to cultural sites and museums. This is educational for children, as well as supporting them to become familiar with the local area, but is not a long-term replacement for formal learning.

Some children have specific cultural needs. Children's diets and personal care are tailored to meet these needs. However, insufficient efforts are made to overcome language barriers with children's families. This slows the building of effective relationships between staff and families. When children are placed a long way from their families, they are not always supported to maintain important family links as well as they could be.

A photographic record of children's time in the home is kept by staff. Children rarely participate in building this into a meaningful record. Sometimes, the record is not provided to children when they move out. This means there could be gaps in their knowledge about their time in care, especially if they reflect on this in later life.

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

Some children who live in the home are subject to a restrictive court order. Any court restrictions are reflected in children's care plans and staff have a good understanding of the reasons for such court orders. However, plans are not

consistently followed, and sometimes children have more unsupervised time than the court considers necessary to keep them safe. This is done without consulting either the court or children's social workers or families. Not fully adhering to court order restrictions placed on children sometimes leads to risks not being closely monitored or managed by staff. This leaves children at risk.

When children go missing from the home, staff follow plans to return them swiftly and safely. They work with others to minimise the time when children's whereabouts are not known. When children return to the home, their physical needs are met, but they do not always have an opportunity to talk to an independent person. This limits opportunities to understand the reasons why children go missing, and what they have been doing during the hours they have been away. When the child's placing authority fails to organise these independent return home interviews, the registered manager and staff do not always offer appropriate challenge to children's local authorities.

There is effective collaboration with other agencies, such as the police, when managing children's risks. Staff and managers share necessary information regularly, which helps to ensure that there is a common understanding about changes to children's needs. The home has detailed assessments of both risks that affect children and risks that children may present to others. These records are regularly maintained. However, the rating of risks does not always align with what information is available about children. This means that insufficient focus is placed on children's known risks and vulnerabilities.

Use of physical restraint is rare, and children are only held for their own or others' safety. Staff are suitably trained and follow the child's individual behaviour-management plans. This means that, when children are held, this happens safely and is effective in shortening how long incidents last.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is held in high regard by both the staff and other stakeholders. The registered manager works collaboratively with others to manage risks to the children. When shortfalls are identified in staff practice, or in any of the home's processes, the registered manager responds quickly to make improvements.

Since the last inspection, the registered manager has gained the required qualification and has used this to improve their own practice. All requirements made at the home's last full inspection have been met. Alongside this, a new recording system has been introduced that better demonstrates children's outcomes. This provides the registered manager with more effective oversight of the home and the quality of care provided.

Care plans are regularly reviewed and amended to ensure that support provided to children is appropriate and effective. The registered manager recognises when children are failing to make progress, and will make the decision to move a child elsewhere if this is in the child's best interests.

Staff receive regular reflective supervision. Staff said that they feel supported in their work and in their roles. Staff discuss children's identified vulnerabilities regularly as a team, and specific training is provided for staff when needed. This promotes a knowledgeable and competent staff team.

Children's views are taken into account and living in a solo-bedded home further supports the care to be highly individualised. The registered manager expects staff to provide nurturing care, where the child's views are central to everything that staff do. This compassionate approach is what the registered manager wants to develop further moving forward. The registered manager has begun to embed this culture through the recruitment of suitable staff, which bodes well for the future.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered persons must take to meet The Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'. The registered persons 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— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(vi)) In particular, this refers to ensuring that risk assessments align with children's known risks, and any mitigations against risks are appropriate.	31 October 2023
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs. (Regulation 5 (b)) In particular, this refers to ensuring that the placing authority provides independent return home interviews, and education placements are arranged quickly.	31 October 2023
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(c)) In particular, this refers to ensuring that any orders issued by the court are implemented in full.	31 October 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff work in partnership with relevant people as appropriate to ensure that each child is provided with support (appropriate to their age and understanding) to communicate their views, wishes and feelings and participate as fully as possible in all aspects of their care planning and daily care. This may include the use of, and support to use, communication aids, equipment and/or any necessary language support. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraphs 4.6 to 4.8)
- The registered person should ensure that children are in full-time education while they are of compulsory school age, unless their personal education plan contained within the care plan or other relevant plan states otherwise. If no education place is identified by the placing authority, the registered person must challenge the placing authority to meet the child's needs under regulation 5 (engaging with the wider system to ensure that children's needs are met). ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraphs 5.14 and 5.15)
- The registered person should recognise that the home's records on each child represent a significant contribution to the child's life history. Children and their parents should be supported to understand the nature of records kept by the home and how to access them. Staff should keep, and encourage children to keep, appropriate memorabilia of the time spent living at the home and help children to record significant life events. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)

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: 2561726

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Vcare - 24 Limited

Registered provider address: Unit 10, Halifax Way, Pocklington Industrial Estate, Pocklington, York YO42 1NP

Responsible individual: Victoria Simpson

Registered manager: Laura Crossland

Inspector

Rachel Ruth, Social Care Inspector

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