

2567806

Registered provider: Laska Care And Education Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned and run by a private organisation and is registered to provide care for up to two children who may have emotional and social difficulties.

The home and the manager registered with Ofsted on 6 May 2020.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 21 June 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/06/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Children in this home are making progress. However, the current team dynamics have affected the standard of care that the children are experiencing. The manager is leading a divided staff team and has struggled to resolve deep seated issues across the team. This has resulted in a lack of team cohesion and a lack of consistency around agreeing care practices, resulting in slow and limited progress for children.

Children are aware of the fractured relationships that exist between individual staff. This has resulted in a tense atmosphere within the home, and relationships between children and their carers are, in some instances, strained due to this. This has resulted in children distancing themselves from staff, often by retreating to their bedrooms. This affects the team's capacity to effectively support children practically and emotionally.

The manager aspires to create a home where children experience natural and nurturing care. However, staff's approach to care is inconsistent as there is no shared ethos among the team. Children told the inspectors that 'welfare checks' feel invasive and are carried out due to instruction rather than because of staff concern. The inspector observed a member of staff wearing an identification badge in the home, which is an example of why children would feel that aspects of their care can feel artificial.

The communal living spaces in the home lack any sense of personalisation or identity. There is ample living space for children to use but staff have failed to take advantage of this. Repairs throughout the home, such as to a fire door and to the vinyl flooring in the kitchen and bathroom, have not been addressed. Resources in the home are sparse. The culmination of these issues results in children living in an uninspiring home environment.

Staff consult children about various issues affecting their lives, but when children make specific complaints, the manager fails to resolve them. The inaction from the manager in this area has fed into the wider dysfunction of the staff team. This has left children feeling that the manager has been unresponsive, resulting in issues festering. This has created unnecessary barriers for children to overcome in their ability to forge productive relationships with their carers.

The manager oversees all referrals that come to the home. There are good structures in place to enable the manager to assess the suitability of offering a child a home. The manager ensures that they visit children prior to children moving in to the home and that there is consultation with the staff team and with the child's placing local authority. These efforts provide a strong foundation from the outset of

the placement so that children have the best possible chance to have stability in their lives.

The manager is determined to work through several challenges that arise around the children's access to education. The manager has ensured that there has been persistent challenge to the children's local authority, which has instigated action. Representatives from the children's virtual school reported to the inspector that they valued the intervention from the manager.

Staff hold important conversations with children that staff capture in key-work sessions. This enables staff and children to reflect on important discussions, creating the opportunity for children to learn. Conversations between staff and children cover a variety of pertinent issues concerning the children's care planning, as well as topical teenage and global issues.

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

The records relating to incidents involving children provide clarity and context. However, in various cases, incident reports reveal poor staff judgement and decision-making. This has resulted in some incidents unnecessarily escalating, which has required the need for staff to restrain children, or for staff to seek police intervention to assist in the behaviour management of children. This is having a detrimental effect on relationships between staff and children.

Children and staff take part in a debrief following all serious incidents. However, the quality of debriefs are mixed and, in some cases, the focus has been on the child's learning and has missed opportunities to address staff development and awareness. This does not ensure that staff learn how to better manage situations when children test boundaries, or when children are in a state of distress.

There is not a culture of reflection and learning in the home. Staff often adopt punitive measures of control to manage children's behaviours. This has meant that staff often rely on asserting their control, such as limiting children's access to the lounge and kitchen. This does not promote creative or restorative approaches to care that support children to learn self-control.

The system for storing and recording medication ensures that children's prescriptions are adhered to. However, there needs to be clearer recording when children decline their prescribed medication. The manager needs to improve practice in this area.

Children do not often go missing from the home, but when they do there are clear risk assessments that guide staff on how they should respond to safely locate the child. Staff responses to children who are missing reduce the level of risk towards the child and keeps them safer by ensuring that there is multi-agency intervention.

Through agreement with a child's placing local authority, staffing levels at the home increased to ensure that there was sufficient staff capacity to support children. The manager is reviewing the staffing levels in conjunction with the local authority. The manager ensures the suitability of agency staff to work at the home prior to them working with the children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The manager has struggled with their ability to maintain regular oversight of the home since the deputy manager left their post earlier in the year. This has left the manager having to cover some shifts, which is affecting the management oversight of the home. This has resulted in there being significant shortfalls in the leadership of the staff team.

The manager has lost their impetus to address significant issues with individual staff. The manager is providing supervision sessions with staff, but their influence is not yielding positive outcomes. This is affecting the quality of care of the children.

Staff morale is low. The management team has not satisfactorily resolved or concluded staff grievances. The manager has missed opportunities through supervision or in team meetings to promote staff cohesion and accountability. This has created apathy and discontent, and has divided the staff team. This affects the atmosphere in the home and the quality of care that the children receive.

There is a lack of knowledge in the staff team around the implications of a child's legal status. The manager does not have a working knowledge of delegated authority, neither has the child's parents. Their respective local authorities have not empowered the manager with delegated authority. This leaves the setting open to legal challenge.

Only one staff member is suitably qualified to undertake their role. Although, in most cases, staff are within the stipulated timescale to acquire the necessary qualification, the lack of staff and management expertise is contributing to the shortfalls concerning the behaviour management of children.

The manager uses auditing tools to assist with their oversight of the functioning of the home. Despite this, the manager has not picked up on key themes, such as behaviour management, and auditing tools are therefore ineffective. In addition, the manager submitted their review of care report significantly late to the regulator. This reduces the regulator's capacity for timely intervention when aspects of the children's care need addressing.

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 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 each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home (Regulation 6 (2)(c)(i)(ii)) This refers to the home needing to be furnished to reflect a stimulating and homely environment for children by maintaining its upkeep and appearance.	1 September 2022
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that each child— is enabled to provide feedback to, and raise issues with, a relevant person about the support and services that the child receives; ensure that the views of each relevant person are taken into account, so far as reasonably practicable, before making a decision about the care or welfare of a child. (Regulation 7 (1)(c) (2)(b)(i)(e))	1 July 2022

This refers to the manager recording children's complaints, recording her investigation and findings, and supporting the child to understand the conclusion to the complaint that they have raised.	
The standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; 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; strive to gain each child's respect and trust; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (2)(i)(ii)(iv)(v)(viii)(ix)(x)(xi)) This refers to staff having the awareness and ability to care for children who are testing boundaries by supporting them to recover through providing calm and nurturing care that reduces the risk of incidents escalating and leading to restraint and/or police intervention. In addition, debriefs need to provide a learning opportunity for staff to develop their practice as an individual but also collectively as a team.	1 July 2022

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. 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 work as a team where appropriate; 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received. (Regulation 13 (1)(a) (2)(a)(b)(c)(e)(f)(g)(i)(ii))	1 July 2022
The registered person must ensure that— children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate;	1 July 2022

is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) This refers to the locking of the lounge door as a behaviour management strategy.	
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children’s home. (Regulation 25 (1)(a)) This refers to self-closing fire doors being serviced and maintained so that they work as intended to reduce the spread of fire.	1 July 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should seek from the person/local authority who holds parental responsibility for the child to legally empower the registered person through delegation of authority. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 11, paragraph 2.5)
- The registered person should ensure that records are kept of the administration of all medication, which includes occasions when prescribed medication is refused. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 35, paragraph 7.15)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff in a care role, including external agency or bank staff, must have the qualification in regulation 32(4) within the relevant timescale listed in regulation 32(5). (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 53, paragraph 10.12)
- The registered person should review the application of the regulation 45 process to ensure the report is evaluative around the effectiveness of the care provided, particularly concerning behaviour management of children. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 65, paragraph 15.3)

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: 2567806

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Laska Care And Education Ltd

Registered provider address: Euroway House, Roysdale Way, Bradford BD4 6SE
United Kingdom

Responsible individual: Garfield Binns

Registered manager: Simone Binns

Inspectors

Steve Guirey, Social Care Inspector
Aasia Hussain, Social Care Inspector

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