

2569358

Registered provider: HMO NE Limited T/A ForeverCare

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private provider. The home provides care for up to three children who may have emotional and social difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2020.

There are two children living in the home. The inspectors spoke to both children during the inspection.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 April 2024

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: 2 October 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/10/2023	Full	Good
07/06/2022	Full	Good
03/08/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

The care of the children is not well coordinated. Although care plans outline the children's history and trauma experiences, they are not ambitious and do not detail the actions that staff should take to encourage the children's progress. This means that children's care is not well organised, affecting the progress that the children can make.

The outcomes for the children vary. For some children, the support from staff is good and enables them to make good progress from their starting points. For example, staff were able to support one child to continue attending school.

However, for one child, the staff were not skilled enough to meet their needs, which impacted the amount of progress the child was able to make. Staff were unable to assist them in pursuing education or community activities. The child had little positive experience, and their risks had increased significantly during their time at the home. This resulted in the child moving on from the home more quickly than expected, which caused further disruption to the child's life.

Children and staff are not protected from the risk of fire. Staff removed fire extinguishers from their designated locations in the home without conducting an appropriate fire risk assessment. One of the fire exits is locked, and this prevents children and staff from evacuating in the event of a fire. The manager accepted the shortfalls, and an action plan was introduced immediately.

The home is spacious but lacks a homely feel. Some areas of the home require urgent attention for repair and redecoration. There are a number of sleep-in rooms available for staff to use, and the manager cannot be certain where the staff were during the evening. One child reported feeling isolated, and they did not know where their support staff were in the evening.

Before children move into the home, the manager and staff carefully consider their needs and risks. The manager consults with previous carers and placing local authority to create a clear plan for the child's introduction to the home. This has helped support children to have a positive experience of moving into the home.

Staff help children to have meaningful relationships with their family and friends. Staff support the children to spend time with the people who are important to them. The staff facilitate this through letters, video calls and visits.

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

Children's risk assessments are updated regularly; however, not all the risks to children are fully considered. Guidance for staff on how best to support children has not been clear. As a result, some children have experienced inconsistent care and responses from staff.

There has been an increase in self-harm incidents for one child. On multiple occasions, staff did not carry out room searches to ensure dangerous items were removed. There is no clear monitoring system in place to assess the risks following incidents. This means self-harm incidents are not always managed effectively. Additionally, the manager and the staff do not consistently seek support and advice from mental health professionals. This is a missed opportunity for staff to ensure their practices are guided by expert advice.

Staff report children missing from home in a timely manner. However, staff lack professional curiosity and do not consistently explore the child's experience when they were missing from home. As a result, one child's risk of going missing from home increased significantly, and they had to move on from the home, which was not in line with their care plan.

Management oversight and action on serious incidents are not robust. The manager and the staff do not take quick enough action to learn from serious incidents and develop staff practices to ensure the children have the support they need. Notifications to Ofsted have not always been made. This oversight has prevented Ofsted from scrutinising how significant incidents and potential safeguarding matters are managed. It has prevented Ofsted from being assured that children are safeguarded and supported by the manager and the staff.

Medication records, including those for controlled medication, are not well maintained. Stock records are not accurate, so when new medication arrives, this is not recorded. The time that medication is administered is not recorded. This has resulted in medication errors where children were not supported to take their medication. This could put children at risk of harm.

Staff hold children as a last resort to keep everyone safe. When incidents take place, the manager and staff take time to reflect on what happened and consider what they could do differently to support children. This enables staff to improve the care provided to children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The system in place to monitor the quality of care that children receive is inadequate. Management oversight of safeguarding concerns, difficult situations and children's views, wishes and feelings are not consistently evident. This means that the manager does not identify and act on shortfalls to improve the quality of care that children receive.

Feedback from professionals is mixed. Some professionals have positive relationships with the staff, and communication is regular. Other professionals lack confidence in the quality of care provided to children and expressed concerns about the professionalism and conduct of the manager and staff skills to manage situations and incidents.

Staff do not have regular and reflective supervision. The frequency of supervision for the new members of staff is not aligned with the provider's supervision policy. The focus of supervision is on the well-being of the staff. It does not address issues related to children, safeguarding incidents, and staff practices. The manager does not oversee or evaluate the level of supervision senior staff members provide to other staff members. This hinders the manager's ability to evaluate staff practice to improve the quality of care provided to children.

The manager does not have effective oversight of staff training. The manager has not provided staff with training opportunities to enhance their understanding of the children's unique needs. Three staff members have not completed the required qualification within the relevant time. One staff member has exceeded the allowed period by two years. This means staff do not have the required knowledge and skills to provide personalised care to children.

The manager does not respond to recommendations made by the independent visitor and external agencies in a timely manner. This demonstrates a lack of learning or commitment to improve the service. This has a negative impact on the children's experience of living in the home.

New and emerging risks associated with the location of the home have not been fully considered by the manager. The manager has not consulted relevant people for a significant period of time. This hinders the manager's ability to develop effective strategies to safeguard children and mitigate the risks associated with the location.

Staff said that they felt they benefited from team meetings, development days and training courses. Staff reported that they are well supported by the manager and the senior leadership team in the wider organisation.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 person 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; 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; and take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi))	30 May 2024
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; and provide adequate means of escape from the home in the event of fire. (Regulation 25 (1)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that fire equipment is easily accessible in the home. In addition, the registered person must ensure that children can exit the building freely in the event of a fire.	30 May 2024

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; 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; 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)(e)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h))	30 May 2024
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—	30 May 2024

medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child; and a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(b)(c))	
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; and 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 each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii))	30 May 2024
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety. For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or	30 May 2024

in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. (Regulation 32 (1) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; and there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation (40) (4)(c)(e))	30 May 2024
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1) (2))	30 May 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should ensure that staff who sleep in the home overnight are provided with appropriate accommodation and facilities. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.26)
- The registered person should ensure the staff must help each child to prepare for any moves from the home, whether they are returning home, moving to another placement or adult care, or to live independently. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27)

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: 2569358

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: HMO NE Limited T/A ForeverCare

Registered provider address: Hallgate House, 9 Grange Terrace, Sunderland SR2 7DF

Responsible individual: Angela Riddell

Registered manager: Karen Hudson

Inspectors

Cherie Chen, Social Care Inspector
Catherine Heron, His Majesty's Inspector

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