

2569358

Registered provider: HMO NE Ltd

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 inspector spoke with both children during the inspection.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 April 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 16 April 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: Requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/04/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
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: good

Children were seen to have positive relationships with staff, who talk about them with affection. One child said that they have four staff they can go to if they need to speak about a worry or concern. Staff invest their time in speaking with children and engaging them in activities. This helps children to see that staff are investing in caring for them.

Children make progress with their learning. One child has made considerable progress in engaging with their learning and attending school. Staff support the child each day to ensure they have a positive start to their day in education. Staff advocate for children when plans for their learning are not finalised and support them to test out new learning and experiences.

Children are offered a variety of activities in the home and community. Children have activity planners, and their views are essential to making decisions about what they want to do. Staff change plans at short notice if a child changes their views about an activity. This supports children to have positive experiences and know they are being listened to. In addition, staff complete memory books for children so that they have memories of their time in the home.

Staff understand how best to promote children's relationships with their friends and family. Staff may support a child with their feelings about their relationships or provide support with managing risks. The staff's understanding of how relationships can affect children ensures they can provide children with the right level of support when needed.

Staff are proactive in supporting children to develop skills for life. Staff have important conversations with children and complete focused work to help them develop their skills. One child is completing awards in their independence, and this helps the child see that their achievements are being recognised.

The property is well furnished, and children's spaces are decorated to their tastes. However, some areas of the home require attention. Walls and toilets were seen to be stained and did not provide a sense that the property is being well cared for.

One child does not have access throughout their home. Although this was initially to manage risks in the home, the child does not have access to a kitchen where staff prepared meals, and their snacks were observed to be stored in a laundry room that requires access with a key. The restrictions in place did not form part of the child's plan.

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

Children receive a high level of supervision in the home. This is because the staff care for children with complex needs and understand how they can best support children. Staff work exceptionally well with other professionals to ensure there is regular

information about children to help manage the risks. The staff have a good understanding of children's risks and vulnerabilities. Although children's care and safety plans hold some inconsistencies, this does not impact the way that staff respond to children.

Staff have important conversations with children about risks or any incidents of concern. Key-worker sessions take place regularly, and staff are proactive in working with children to help reduce risks. This advice and guidance help children to explore their feelings and understand how they can be safer in the home and community.

One child's missing-from-home episodes have been reduced. Staff are proactive in making every effort to locate the child when they are missing from home. Staff welcome children home sensitively and monitor their presentation on their return. In addition, there are waking night staff, and this helps manage some risks and allows staff to be alert when a child may leave the home during the night.

Children are held by trained staff as a last resort to keep them and others safer. Staff use their skills to de-escalate situations and try new ways to support children. For one child, this has significantly reduced the number of times they are held by staff and has led to better ways of supporting the child when they are struggling with their feelings.

A fire door is fitted with a loud alarm to alert staff if a child leaves the home. This is activated if the child leaves the home from their nearest exit. Due to the noise this makes, all staff and the other child in the home will hear this. The need for the monitoring is not in the child's risk assessment, and written consent for this is outstanding.

Safe recruitment practice is in place for those staff who come to work in the home on a permanent basis. However, when agency staff come to work in the home, there is limited information provided about the staff's right to work, their previous employment histories or references. Therefore, the manager cannot be assured that safe recruitment procedures have been followed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The review of the quality of care reports has not been received by Ofsted over the last year. The manager was unable to locate these to provide a copy of the reports for this inspection. Therefore, there is no evidence to show that a review of care has taken place. In addition, the systems for monitoring and quality assuring children's records are not firmly embedded.

A child's pathway plan is out of date and does not reflect the child living in the home or his current learning needs. The systems for reviewing children's records are not embedded to ensure that information held in relation to children is accurate. This includes oversight of the home's care plans, which do not evidence how the manager is having oversight of these essential documents for children, particularly considering children's level of risks.

Not all staff are receiving regular and reflective supervision with a manager. Although the home operates with regular agency staff, there are no arrangements in place for them to receive professional supervision.

Progress has been made with staff achieving a qualification to work with children in residential care. Those who do not hold a qualification are enrolled and in the process of completing this. There is now only one member of staff who has not achieved their qualification within the relevant timescales.

The registered manager is responsive to children's changing needs and involves other professionals in decision-making and planning for children. The registered manager has developed strong working relationships with professionals involved in safeguarding a child in her care. This ensures that communication works well to ensure that all professionals have the same information about the child. This strengthens the support plan around the child.

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, The 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 complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report"). The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home. The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5))	6 June 2025

The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. 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. 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 (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a))	6 June 2025
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;	6 June 2025

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))	
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance; so far as reasonably practicable in the light of the child's age and understanding, the child is informed in advance of the intention to do the monitoring or surveillance; and the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d))	6 June 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they have systems in place so that all staff, including agency staff, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that the home also meets the children's basic day-to-day needs and physical necessities. Staff should seek to meet the child's basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met. Doing so is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child and value them as an individual. In particular, the registered person should ensure that all areas of the home are cleaned regularly. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)

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 Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Angela Riddell

Registered manager: Karen Hudson

Inspector

Joanne Wallis, Social Care Inspector

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