

# 2576423

Registered provider: Platform Childcare Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private company. The home provides care for up to five children with social and emotional difficulties. There were five children living at the home at the time of this inspection.

The home is led by a registered manager.

**Inspection dates: 14 and 15 November 2023**

**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 **requires improvement to be good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 6 June 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 06/06/2022      | Full            | Good                 |
| 15/11/2021      | Full            | Good                 |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Most children said that they enjoy their home. They have fun, and they make good childhood memories, including trying new experiences. Children and staff regularly go swimming together. This helps to develop children's relationships with each other and staff. One child spoke appreciatively of staff support through some difficult times; they felt that staff did not give up on them. Some children seek physical comfort from staff, and this helps to develop important and strong bonds. Children benefit from this stability and gain a sense of belonging.

Since the last inspection, two children have moved into the home and one child has left. The manager has devised a plan to support another child's imminent move from the home. The manager and staff have prepared the child well and the child is excited about their next steps. The manager has acknowledged that some information relating to a child who has recently moved into the home was missing at the point of the move. The child is not yet receiving education and staff are trying to help this child to settle. This transition has negatively affected the stability of the other children.

The home is clean and spacious. Children enjoy the communal areas and outside space, for example building dens or playing in an orchard. The manager ensures that repairs and maintenance tasks are quickly undertaken to maintain good standards. Children are helped to make their bedroom special to them. Most children have many personal belongings in their room, which helps them to settle and feel comfortable. One child has few possessions in their room, but this is part of their care planning and is designed to keep them safe.

Children make progress in developing independence and personal care skills and in expressing their individuality. One parent described the home as 'a little jewel'. The staff are key to helping children make progress. A child's social worker said, 'Staff support has increased, and the child's confidence and aspirations have grown.'

Most children have made progress in education. For one child, access to education has improved; however, there is still work to do in increasing educational provision for this child. Staff are working in collaboration with the child's tutor to provide additional educational opportunities. There has been significant drift in progressing a school place for this child and the manager's efforts in escalating this have had limited impact.

Staff support children to stay in touch with family members and those close to them. Staff work well with allocated social workers and family members to maintain significant relationships for children. Staff know this is important for children to maintain their identity and keep these crucial relationships into adulthood.

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

Staff help children to reduce the risks they face from behaviours that can jeopardise their safety and well-being. Children rarely go missing from the home. There has also been a reduction in self-harming behaviour for one child. This is significant progress for the child. Staff have supported another child to progress from having close supervision and monitoring by staff to now safely enjoying time without the need for close supervision. The child is proud of their progress and looking forward to their future.

Children are helped to build resilience through support and help from a psychotherapist working with the home. In addition, staff carry out 'keep me safe' sessions with children. These cover a wide range of topics that might have a negative impact on a child, such as bullying. Staff also use additional resources to meet children's individual needs. Children's progress is reviewed through individual resilience plans. However, there is limited evaluation of how the one-to-one work contributes to children's progress and safety.

Staff have significantly reduced the frequency with which they have to hold one child to help them manage difficult feelings. When staff do use holds, this is for brief periods. Individual debriefing sessions help the child to recognise their feelings when they are upset. However, there are emerging risks during incidents, relating to a specific area of the home. This is not reflected in the child's risk assessment. This means that staff do not have specific guidance to manage this situation.

The manager has not updated current expectations of staff in helping a child to travel safely by car. This leaves the potential for confusion and upset if staff use outdated guidance.

Children said that house rules do not always make sense, for example if they are being asked to go to their bedroom early. Staff do not clearly communicate the reasons for these decisions to children. This is confusing.

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

Staff feel that the manager supports them well. There has been little staff turnover since the last inspection. The manager is dual-registered as a manager for this home and another home owned by the organisation. In recent months, their presence in this home has been limited as they have spent most of their time at the other home and have relied on the deputy manager, who is new to the role. The manager is now able to provide the home with more oversight and support.

The manager's oversight of allegations is not yet rigorous. The manager's own steps to investigate and evaluate information are unclear, and their oversight and monitoring systems have not been fully effective in identifying and progressing outstanding actions. This has led to Ofsted not receiving a notification about an

allegation. This prevents Ofsted from being able to fully evaluate the information to be confident that children are safe.

The manager has not yet embedded opportunities for staff learning and development. One member of staff reported that 'team meetings are hectic' and there is 'little time for team building because of the rota'. There is a lack of reflection in staff supervision records and team meetings to help staff reflect on their care practice to support ongoing development.

The language used by staff in records of team meetings and the children's plans does not reflect the nurturing care that staff show children. Additionally, following incidents and debriefs with staff, the manager is not identifying learning and developmental opportunities. For example, one child's risk assessment does not reflect the child's stage of development and understanding.

The manager and leaders are satisfied that staff have the capacity to meet the needs of the children. More recently, staff have experienced challenges in helping a new child admitted to the home to settle in. This has affected children's routine and caused other children additional anxiety. Leaders have not ensured that children are helped to come to terms with the impact of a new child's arrival in the home and to alleviate their anxieties.

Most social workers and school staff reported that staff support children well. For one child, a higher-level teaching assistant reported that communication is not always forthcoming from staff. Staff did not share information about a new child's arrival in the home. This limited the ability of school staff to support their child with this change.

## 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         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential;</p> <p>and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)(h))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the manager reviewing and evaluating the care provided to children. The manager should robustly investigate and record allegations. Staff should be supported to learn from incidents so that they have a clear understanding of how they can help children make progress. The registered person must ensure that monitoring systems are in place and that they are effective, and that shortfalls are recognised and responded to effectively.</p> | 22 December 2023 |
| <p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 22 December 2023 |

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that arrangements are in place to—</p> <p>ensure the effective induction of each child into the home;</p> <p>manage and review the placement of each child in the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(i)(ii))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that children already living in the home are prepared and supported when another child moves into the home.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                               |                         |
| <p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious;</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(c)(e))</p> <p>In particular, the registered provider must notify Ofsted of any incident deemed as serious, and without delay. The registered provider must ensure that all relevant information is shared in this notification.</p> | <p>22 December 2023</p> |

## Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that general principles for behaviour management in the home include: treating each child with understanding, dignity, kindness and respect; building, protecting and preserving positive relationships between each child and the adults caring for them; understanding each child's behaviour to allow their needs, aspirations, experiences and strengths to be recognised and their quality of life to be enhanced; involving children and relevant others wherever practical in behaviour management; supporting each child to balance safety from injury (harm) with making appropriate choices; making sure the child's rights are upheld. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.35).

## **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:** 2576423

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Platform Childcare Ltd

**Registered provider address:** Suite 2 Millennium Court, First Avenue, Burton-on-Trent DE14 2WH

**Responsible individual:** Zamir Lal

**Registered manager:** Sarah Gibbs

## Inspector

Helen Gronhaug, Social Care Inspector

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