

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. It is registered to provide care for up to four children who may experience emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The home opened on 27 April 2020. There is a registered manager in post.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 2 February 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 November 2021

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

Date of last inspection: this is the first full inspection of this home

Overall judgement at last inspection: none

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

This home has not been previously inspected.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Although this home has not yet had a full inspection, a monitoring visit was undertaken. All children have continued to make good progress in all areas of their development. The registered manager is careful when deciding which children should come to live at the home. He ensures that children only move in if staff can meet their needs. He is careful not to jeopardise the stability of the children who are already living at the home. One child moved into the home this year and is already making progress. A parent described the commitment and communication from staff as 'excellent'. They are confident that their child is being well cared for.

All children have educational placements. They enjoy learning and attending school. Where children have been without a school place, the registered manager has been persistent in challenging the wider professional network. This makes sure that children receive their educational entitlement. There are books around the house, which encourage children to read, and there is a small room designated for homework. Some children do extra-curricular activities such as gymnastics, and other children are working towards developing their hobbies and interests. For example, staff are trying to find a riding stables so that one child can start horse riding.

Health appointments for children are up to date. Some children struggle with their body image and this can have an impact on how much they eat. Staff are mindful of this and work hard to remove any anxiety around mealtimes and food. Children and staff regularly bake together and choose recipes. This helps children to understand how ingredients make up meals. Children are encouraged to eat vegetables or salad with main meals and they take regular exercise.

Children state that they like 'everyone' who cares for them. This year, the children were excited to throw a one-year anniversary party for the home. They made posters, baked cakes, and invited other children from the organisation. This helped the children develop a sense of permanency and they were given the opportunity to meet other children who are in care. Although staff do a lot to create important memories for children, this is not yet captured for children on an individual basis in the form of life story work.

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

Staff know the children well. Staff have worked hard to understand what makes children feel safe. For example, one child who fears spiders likes that they have a netted canopy over their bed to catch spiders whilst they are sleeping. A second child likes their bed made in a specific way, otherwise they become anxious. Staff listen to and act on the wishes of children, to help the children feel safe and secure.

Children who are at an increased risk, due to their behaviour, settle quickly once they move into the home. For example, incidents for one child have reduced, to the extent that the child has now been settled for several months. This is because children are encouraged to speak to staff if they are upset, frustrated or angry. Children share their worries with the staff, which enables staff to intervene and offer nurture before incidents occur or escalate.

The multi-agency safeguarding response for children is good. Wider professionals state that communication with staff is excellent. Involved professionals describe staff as having a 'can-do' attitude and try their best to improve outcomes for children. For example, a police community support officer has been given the opportunity to visit the children. This helps to build relationships and remove any negative stigma about the police. Although some children now live far away from their families, staff have worked hard to ensure that all children receive well-planned care from their placing local authority.

When children's behaviour is difficult, staff understand the underlying reasons. This is because they have read important information about the child and taken a full history. The staff understand the children's emotional vulnerabilities. Where bullying has taken place, swift action has been taken to address this. However, one child reports to still feeling bullied. The registered manager is not yet writing down what action he is taking to support children and address staff practice. This is an area for improvement.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There has been a pattern of staff leaving the home, resulting in shortages. This means that many staff are relatively new to the role and are not yet qualified. However, a core group of staff remain and provide consistency of care for children. Stability in staffing is beginning to improve, but there remain vacancies. The staff team is covering additional shifts. Additionally, the registered manager and the deputy manager have worked longer shifts to care for the children and provide additional stability and support to staff.

Staff morale is good, despite the staffing worries. The staff are motivated to do a good job for children. The staff have regular supervision and developmental appraisals, and all the staff understand the areas for ongoing development, both for themselves and the home. Staff supervisions could be further strengthened by being more reflective. The staff are well prepared for their role because training is of a good standard. The manager has been working hard to recruit a more gender-balanced team. This will mean children receive care from both males and females and provide children with positive role models.

Overall, there is good management oversight and children's records are detailed. Where there have been concerns relating to staff practice, the manager has acted on these quickly. This has ensured that high standards of care are upheld for children. Following the last monitoring visit to the home, the manager has made

changes to the process of risk assessment. Risk assessment documents now accurately set out historical risks for the children that may hinder their progress.

The registered manager is planning to leave the home. The children and staff have been told, and children have been given the opportunity to discuss their feelings about this and plan their goodbyes, in a way that is meaningful to them. A new manager has been appointed and there is a plan for the children to build a relationship with the new manager before the registered manager leaves.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff undertake life story work or other direct work with children. Staff in children's homes should play a full role in work of this kind. This specifically relates to children needing life story work to be completed throughout their period of being cared for. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.14)
- The registered person should ensure that staff supervision enables staff to reflect and act on how their own feelings and behaviour may be affected by the behaviour of the children they care for. This specifically relates to reflective supervision not yet being documented in supervision records. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.15)
- The registered person should make sure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. Where there are incidents for children such as bullying and self-harm, the registered manager is not yet writing down what action he will take to support children and address staff practice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should plan staffing levels so that they meet the needs of children and can respond flexibly to unexpected events or opportunities. Staffing structures should promote continuity of care from the child's perspective. If children complain or give a view on how the staffing structure could be improved to promote the best care for them, appropriate action should be taken. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.15')
- The registered person should ensure that, whenever possible, staff in day-to-day contact with children should include staff from the different gender groups. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.22')

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, First Floor, Millennium Court, First Avenue, Centrum 100, Burton-Upon-Trent DE14 2WH

Responsible individual: Zamir Lal

Registered manager: Joshua Williams

Inspector

Andi Lilley-Tams, Social Care Inspector

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