

2577036

Registered provider: Sozo Care Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home's statement of purpose states that it provides care and accommodation for up to three children who may have social and/or emotional difficulties.

This privately owned home registered with Ofsted on 8 April 2020. The registered manager left on 21 November 2020. The responsible individual resigned from the organisation on 12 May 2021.

The home temporarily closed on 25 May 2021 and plans to reopen in July 2021. The provider has informed Ofsted that a new manager and a new responsible individual are in post.

At the time of the inspection no children were living at the home.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 10 February 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 14 to 15 July 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are widespread failures that mean children are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Not previously inspected

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Children have not benefited from care which helps them to reach their full potential. Staff do not keep consistent records which detail children's daily experiences, progress or achievements. It is difficult to see how living at the home has had a positive impact on children's lives.

Children's care plans outline their individual needs and the support they require. However, children have not received consistent support with their education. Concerns were evident in relation to children sleeping all day and their lack of any academic progress.

Children's care plans detail their interests, such as music. However, there is very little evidence of staff nurturing children's interests or talents. Children do not have the opportunity to participate in a wide range of activities or new experiences.

Some children enjoyed spending time at the home. They liked playing table tennis, gaming, listening to music and watching movies. Children have also been able to entertain their friends at the home.

Recently, children were noted to benefit from regular meetings with their key worker. These meetings enabled children to discuss various topics and express their thoughts and feelings. Staff used these meetings to help children make positive choices.

Staff have encouraged children to develop independent living skills. Children have taken responsibility for their laundry and cleaning their rooms. They have also learned the importance of budgeting, through the management of their personal allowances.

The home has recently been redecorated and is well maintained. Motivational quotes are on display throughout the home. Welcome packs are provided to children which include toiletries and a new towel set.

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

The safeguarding arrangements in relation to incidents of restraint, fire safety and staff recruitment do not ensure that children are safeguarded from harm.

Restraint practice is unsafe. Staff do not receive training in de-escalation techniques and do not learn how to physically intervene safely to prevent a child from harming others. Records demonstrate that on one occasion, staff did not record the duration of a restraint and a 'bear hug' was used to hold the child. During another incident of restraint, one child was lifted up in the air and then pinned to the floor by a member

of staff. This incident was reported to the necessary professionals and Ofsted. The staff member was also dismissed.

Leaders and managers do not follow safer recruitment guidance, which means that unsuitable people could be caring for children at the home. There are incidents of people in authority not following safer recruitment procedures and employing staff because they know them. For example, a relative of a senior leader was employed without an application form or two references. The reason for appointing staff is not recorded on recruitment records and leaders and managers do not complete a risk assessment if a staff member has convictions. Consequently, recruitment processes do not ensure that children are safeguarded effectively.

Poor fire safety practices mean that the home is not a safe environment. The tumble dryer has an excessive amount of fluff, which is a fire hazard. The certificates to confirm the safety of the fire extinguishers and the fire alarm system have expired. Furthermore, the last fire alarm test was in April 2021, despite the usual timeframe being for staff to undertake weekly tests.

The home's surveillance practices also infringe on their neighbour's privacy. One of the home's close circuit television cameras monitors the neighbour's back garden. Leaders and managers are aware of this issue, however, no action has been taken to turn off this camera.

When children live at the home, staff complete risk assessments for them that highlight how staff will manage concerning issues. Staff discuss dangers with children, such as grooming, criminal exploitation, carrying knives and gang affiliation. Furthermore, staff help children to reduce the number of times that they go missing from the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leaders and managers are ineffective in prioritising children's safety and meeting their needs. Poor practice has not been promptly challenged. The provider recognised this and dismissed the staff team and temporarily closed the home in May 2021.

Children have not benefited from stable management arrangements. The home has been without a registered manager for approximately eight months. Ofsted has not received an application to register from the newly appointed manager and responsible individual.

Children have not received care from a well-supported staff team. Staff have not had a comprehensive induction, regular training opportunities or regular professional supervision.

Since the closure of the home in May 2021, the setting has not been monitored by an independent person. As the home is still registered, it is a legal requirement that an independent person continues to visit the home on a monthly basis.

Record-keeping is poor. Staff do not record all of the required information in the register of children, keep sufficient daily logs or a log of complaints. This compromises management oversight and monitoring and review systems at the home. A neighbour reported to the inspector that they have made various complaints to the provider and to the police.

Two of the requirements from the monitoring visit in February 2021 have been repeated. These relate to the leadership and management of the home and the staff recruitment practices. Leaders and managers are focusing on recruiting a child-focused staff team, who have aspirations for children in their care.

Leaders and managers are aware of the areas for development. The provider took the decision to close the home and recruit new leaders and managers and a competent staff team. Leaders and managers have a vision for the future and a determination to improve.

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 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 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 has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e))	30 August 2021
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,	30 August 2021

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. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d)) Specifically, staff must have an application form and two references. A reason for appointment must be recorded and a risk assessment carried out if an employee has convictions.	
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(b))	30 August 2021
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b)) Specifically, record all the required information in the register of children.	30 August 2021
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; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b))	30 August 2021
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—	30 August 2021

that staff— help each child to achieve the child’s education and training targets, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v))	
Restraint in relation to a child must be proportionate. (Regulation 20 (2))	30 August 2021
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of a restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— a description of the measure and its duration. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(iv))	30 August 2021
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. (Regulation 24 (1)(a))	30 August 2021
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)) Specifically, ensure fluff is removed from the tumble dryer, fire alarms are regularly tested, and the fire alarm and fire extinguishers are regularly serviced.	30 August 2021
The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. (Regulation 33 (1)(a))	30 August 2021
The registered person must ensure that all employees—	30 August 2021

undertake appropriate continuing professional development and receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b))	
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (3))	30 August 2021
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. (Regulation 44 (1))	30 August 2021
Any person who carries on or manages an establishment or agency of any description without being registered under this Part in respect of it shall be guilty of an offence. (Regulation 11 (1) Care Standards Act 2000) Specifically, the appointed manager and responsible individual must apply to register with Ofsted.	30 August 2021

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: 2577036

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sozo Care Homes Limited

Registered provider address: 34 Swansea Court, London E16 2RT

Responsible individual: Post vacant

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sharon Payne, Social Care Inspector

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