

2579887

Registered provider: Dorset Emergency Placement Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to two children. The home is operated by a private provider. Two children are currently living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2023. The former manager is still registered and now works in an operational role.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 July 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **inadequate**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 1 November 2022

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
01/11/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
22/03/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
18/08/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Widespread shortfalls resulting from poor leadership and management mean the care for children is not well planned, they are not always safe and they do not make the progress they should.

Children enjoy spending time with staff baking, going for walks or to the seaside for ice creams. Staff provide children with daily structure and routine when possible. Staff proactively engage children and spend time with them. At the end of each day, staff encourage children to reflect on their day and what has gone well for them. Children have broad targets in place for staff to know what to help them achieve. However, these targets lack detail, for staff to know how to meaningfully support children on a day-to-day basis.

One child receives their education through online tutoring. Staff ensure the child has the space and privacy to undertake this daily. The other child has a place at a local specialist provision, which, however, they are struggling to attend following an issue with peers. The manager is working with the child and local authority to make an alternative plan. This child continues to miss out on important opportunities through not attending school.

The home environment is not well maintained and has been allowed to deteriorate significantly. The carpet on the stairs is threadbare in places. Walls, doors and doorframes throughout the home are scuffed and marked. Children's bedrooms are not clean. The window in one child's room is boarded up, following an incident four weeks before the inspection. Staff fail to provide children with a welcoming and homely environment, or to recognise their role in helping children to keep their rooms clean. The manager is progressing plans to change the carpet and decorate the children's bedrooms. However, progress is slow, and there are significant delays between issues being identified and improvements being made.

One child is new to the home since the last inspection. Leaders and managers failed to fully consider the impact of both children's needs on each other. The manager was overly optimistic about the progress the child already living in the home had made, which led to the minimising of potential risks. As part of a safety plan for this child moving into the home, it had been agreed that the child would be supervised overnight by a member of staff sitting in their room. This overly intrusive approach was not questioned or critically considered by the home. Leaders and managers did not consider other, less restrictive options. One child is deprived of their liberty through a court order. Leaders and managers fail to consider the impact of the environmental restrictions arising from the court order on the other child in the home.

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

Safeguarding arrangements in this home are not robust. The inspector identified that an allegation was not referred to the appropriate safeguarding authorities as required. There was a discussion with the child's social worker about the matter. However, there was a lack of recognition of the need for external oversight from the local safeguarding authorities.

Leaders and managers fail to scrutinise the care provided in the home and, therefore, they have not identified the worrying shortfalls in practice which have been seen during the course of this inspection. One child suffered a distressing experience in the sea, but this was not recorded. The manager has not considered whether staff action was appropriate or whether a notification to the regulator was required. The risk assessment was not updated following the concern. This was done during the inspection.

One child is lawfully deprived of their liberty. However, since this agreement has been in place, they have continued to go missing from home. Records do not always contain sufficient detail for managers to understand efforts made to search for children. Leaders and managers do not scrutinise this to understand why, and what actions can better keep children safe. Leaders and managers do not work closely with the local authority to ensure children receive return home interviews. As such, children do not have the opportunity to speak about why they went missing. In addition, learning from missing incidents is not shared with the home to support future planning.

Leaders, managers and staff fail to fully understand the risk of children harming themselves. The lack of clear planning means that staff do not know how to support children to reduce this risk. Similarly, there is a lack of planning about the risk of opportunistic substance misuse by one child. In both circumstances, weak planning means restrictions imposed are often arbitrary and poorly understood. The lack of incremental progress and review mean children do not consistently receive support to increase their safety.

Poor scrutiny of medication records means errors are not identified. Discrepancies in recording are not properly understood. Because medication errors are not identified, they are not investigated, and remedial action is not implemented.

Leaders and managers do not ensure all staff and children understand what actions to take in the event of a fire. While they know about using designated exits in the daytime, there is a lack of awareness or consideration about what to do if these exits are blocked.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The shortfalls in this home are primarily because of disjointed and poorly understood management arrangements. The manager delegates tasks in the home to others but does not know if they are completed. As a result, there is insufficient accountability or action. The manager struggled to find documentation relating to the management of the home during the inspection, and could not provide key evidence requested. Despite attempts to improve management oversight, the current arrangements are ineffective. The inexperienced manager understands that there are shortfalls in the home. However, the wider leadership team does not offer him sufficient challenge or support to drive improvements. As a result, care in this home continues to fail children.

Recruitment of staff is not always safe as it is not evident that all necessary checks have been completed. This includes for a temporary member of staff who performed waking-night duties in the home. As a result, leaders and managers have not assured themselves that some staff do not present a risk to children.

Staff enjoy working in the home and value the positive relationships with the children. They are proud of the relationships they have developed and this is reflected in the daily records. More experienced staff are confident in their role and mentor newer members of the team. However, the lack of oversight of the quality of care by leaders and managers means they do not identify areas for staff development.

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 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; 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)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h)) In particular, ensure there are clear processes in place for actions and accountability. In addition, ensure that care in the home is monitored, reviewed and understood by leaders and managers at all levels in order to lead to development and improvement.	11 August 2023

A requirement was made under regulation 13 at the last inspection.	
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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— provide personalised care that meets each child’s needs, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans, taking account of the child’s background; 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)(b)(iv)(c)(i)(ii)) In particular, ensure that the home is in good decorative order and that the window in one child’s bedroom is repaired. In addition, ensure that the impact of one child’s restrictions do not impact on the other child’s freedoms.	11 August 2023
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;	11 August 2023

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; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(e)) In particular, ensure that there are clear plans in place for staff to follow to support children and reduce their risk of harm. In addition, ensure that children receive return home interviews when they go missing and that leaders use these to inform future planning. The registered person should also ensure that staff clearly record incidents that happen in the home, and that referrals are made to safeguarding authorities as necessary.	
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— medicines kept in the home are stored in a secure place so as to prevent any child from having unsupervised access to them; a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(a)(c)) In particular, ensure clear and accurate records of medication administration are maintained. In addition, ensure there is	25 August 2023

regular oversight of these records, to identify and investigate any discrepancies.	
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child’s need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(d)) In particular, ensure that when using monitoring and surveillance in the home, the least restrictive options are always considered.	11 August 2023
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. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d)) In particular, ensure that the checks required under schedule 2 are completed for all staff working in the home and are recorded.	28 July 2023
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— make arrangements for persons working at the home to receive suitable training in fire prevention; and ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire.	11 August 2023

(Regulation 25 (1)(c)(d)) In particular, ensure records of fire drills contain sufficient information for the registered person to be satisfied that staff and children know what to do in the event of a fire.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home’s statement of purpose; that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; manage and review the placement of each child in the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)) In particular, ensure children’s needs and risks are considered in full and in the context of their known history when making decisions about children moving into the home.	25 August 2023
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or	28 July 2023

concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or

there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.
(Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))

In particular, ensure a notification is made to the regulator when serious incidents occur in the home.

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: 2579887

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Dorset Emergency Placement Services Ltd

Registered provider address: 5 Lorton Gardens, Weymouth DT3 5FB

Responsible individual: Mark Derrien

Registered managers: Michael Stacey, Steven Varney

Inspector

Clare Nixon, Social Care Inspector

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