

2580887

Registered provider: Stanfield Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to four children between the ages of 11 and 18 years with social, emotional and behavioural needs.

The registered manager has been in post since May 2020.

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 2 September 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 July 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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Not previously inspected		
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Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Since the home opened in May 2020, there have been some positive experiences for children. Children have benefited from greater engagement in education and a reduction in risk-taking behaviours, and they have established positive relationships with some staff. Yet there are several areas which require improvement to be good.

The staff support children to attend education. Children have increased their attendance in education compared to their attendance prior to moving to the home. However, children's attendance and engagement are inconsistent.

One child has worked towards completing GCSEs and has gained employment in the area local to the home. These are significant achievements and have been encouraged and celebrated by the staff. This child said, 'I am doing so well here. I would not have got a job or worked towards GCSEs if I wasn't here.'

The children's experiences at the home have not consistently been good. One child sustained an assault from another child which led to a significant injury. On occasions, children have felt bullied by their peers. Although staff challenge incidents of bullying, the level of challenge has not consistently been effective. Some staff have been assaulted. Assaults on staff are unsettling for children to observe and staff to sustain.

The decoration of the home has improved overall; however, some areas require attention. The stair carpet is stained. The garden requires maintaining as stinging nettles grow in some areas of the lawn. A fence that was erected to provide additional safety to the home has come down.

The staff know the children well and provide a good range of activities, although children's participation varies.

Staff create memory books for the children. These contain photographs of memorable times spent with staff and other children. The making of positive memories helps children to gain a sense of belonging and helps them to make positive connections with the people around them.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

There have been 27 incidents of children going missing from the home since September 2020. Although the frequency of the children going missing has reduced over time, the level of risk and vulnerability that the children are exposed to during these incidents remains high. Two children have travelled significant distances while they have been missing from the home. One child had been missing on two occasions for several consecutive days. This child remained missing from the home at the time of the inspection.

Staff follow the children's protocols well and this is reflected in the comprehensive records. Social workers said that they feel confident that staff respond to and manage children's missing-from-home incidents well. Staff are creative and use a variety of measures to try to locate children when they are missing. The staff are aware of the social media platforms that children use, and staff use innovative ways to draw on any information that may lead to the child being found. The police said that staff work effectively with them from the point that the child is missing until their safe return. The manager makes appropriate challenge to the placing authority to request that return home interviews take place.

Overall, safeguarding concerns and allegations are responded to and managed effectively by the staff. However, one allegation concerning staff practice had not been referred to the designated officer. The manager had liaised with the Children's Advice and Duty Service and undertook an investigation which contributed to disciplinary action being taken. Although the impact of this oversight was minimised, the manager failed to adhere to the home's safeguarding policy in respect of referring allegations against staff. This prevented the designated officer from having sufficient oversight of the concern or the opportunity to give direction on how it should be managed.

Several actions that were raised in a fire risk assessment have been addressed. However, one action relating to the replacement of seals in the fire doors had not been undertaken. During the inspection, the staff began replacing the fire seals; however, this was only after this shortfall was identified by the inspector.

Staff do not always manage conflict effectively. On occasion, this has led to incidents that may have been prevented. Four incidents occurred that involved children accessing the staff office and gaining access to a safe and other items. Staff de-escalation and behaviour management, at times, have not been effective to keep children safe. Staff have not consistently provided effective boundaries to manage the children's behaviour.

Effective management monitoring identifies when staff may have imposed a sanction that is excessive or not proportionate or relevant to the behaviour it is intended to address. The manager provides staff with alternative suggestions to manage children's behaviour. This helps teach children to learn from their mistakes.

Some children have been involved in alcohol and substance misuse and have not been safe online. Some of the children's behaviours have been volatile, and children have consequently been at risk of harm. The nature of children's relationships with each other has meant that some children have been at risk of harm. In response to these behaviours, staff have provided children with advice and guidance through meaningful conversations. Connections have also been made with services that can support issues such as substance misuse and child sexual exploitation. Risk assessments detail appropriate risk-reduction strategies and are reflective of current and emerging risks. The staff work collaboratively with other agencies to share concerns when risks emerge. Although staff try to keep children safe and do take positive action, the complexity of children's needs means that the effectiveness of staff's action is variable.

There has been a reduction in some behaviours of concern; however, the high level of risk that some children are exposed to remains.

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

The manager is working towards a required qualification. The manager is passionate about the children, is honest and reflective, and she has a good oversight of the strengths of the home and the areas that require development. During her leadership, she has made some positive changes to develop the home. However, some decisions made by the manager that specifically relate to children moving into the home have been overly optimistic.

Since June 2020, eight children have moved into the home and five children have moved out due to staff being unable to meet these children's needs. Some children have been moved on from the home quickly and have not had a positive ending to their time at the home. Children have not always been matched suitably to ensure that the group dynamics remain positive. On occasion, there has been information lacking from placing authorities that has only come to light after the child had moved into the home. One child's behaviour altered quite significantly when they moved into the home. However, on occasion, the manager agreed to some children moving in with little information.

Impact risk assessments have included information that would indicate that a child would not be a suitable match for other children at the home. Despite this, their admission was still agreed. This has led to negative group dynamics and an increase in risky behaviours. The manager has not implemented lessons learned from these experiences to ensure that similar mistakes are not repeated. Such abrupt endings to living at the home disrupt attachments that the child may have and affects their sense of belonging.

The staff are very positive about the manager's leadership and managerial oversight. They said that they feel supported by the manager.

Social workers spoke highly about the manager's leadership and management of safeguarding concerns, including children going missing from the home. The manager communicates effectively with other agencies to obtain services and resources that will benefit the children.

Complaints are responded to appropriately. The staff ensure that children are provided with an acknowledgment letter and outcome whenever they make a complaint. The staff ensure that children are satisfied with the outcome of the complaint. A child said that they felt confident that any of their complaints would be swiftly addressed by the manager.

The staff are up to date with the organisation's mandatory training. Over half the staff do not have the required qualification for the role; however, they are within the time frame to achieve it.

Supervisions explore practice issues and provide guidance to staff to improve their practice. New staff have additional meetings to their supervision. These meetings focus on staff accountability, which affects the quality of care that children receive.

Restraint records are monitored effectively, and concerns raised in debriefs are acted on by the manager. The manager monitors the internal records to good effect.

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 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 to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(vii)) In particular: replace the soiled carpet on the stairs; maintain the rear garden to a reasonable standard. This requirement was made at the assurance visit and is restated.	16 August 2021
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—	30 July 2021

that staff— de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(xi)) This requirement was made at the assurance visit and is restated.	
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— are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vii)) In particular, ensure prompt referral of safeguarding concerns and allegations to the designated officer.	30 July 2021
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 arrangements are in place to— plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iii))	30 July 2021
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (1) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for	30 July 2021

article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b))

In particular, replace ineffective fire seals on the fire doors.

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: 2580887

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Stanfield Care Services Limited

Registered provider address: Unit 6, Cuckoo Wharf, 435 Lichfield Road, Birmingham, Warwickshire B6 7SS

Responsible individual: Charlotte Riggs

Registered manager: Marie Brodie

Inspector

Lianne Bradford, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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