

2586067

Registered provider: Ivory Cottage Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and provides care for up to four children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The registered manager post is currently vacant.

Inspection dates: 21 to 22 May 2024

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

Date of last inspection: 26 July 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: Requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: On 2 April 2024 Ofsted issued a notice of decision to cancel the registration of the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/07/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
07/06/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
01/02/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
09/06/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

There are widespread failures in the safeguarding practice and the leadership and management of the home. This hinders and compromises children's experiences and progress.

At the time of the inspection, one child lived at the home. The child was seen and spoken to by the inspectors. Since the last inspection, one child has moved out. No children have moved in.

A lack of attention by managers and staff means that the child does not always receive the care they need. For example, staff do not meet the child's cultural and faith needs consistently. This lack of diligence by staff does not promote the child's identity or self-esteem. In addition, a lack of escalation with the child's placing authority means that the arrangements for the child to spend time with family members lacks essential clarity.

Some staff have formed positive relationships with the child. However, since the last inspection, significant changes in staffing have created instability for the child with seventeen staff having moved on. Some staff have left without saying goodbye to the child. Staff have not helped the child to process this loss.

The house lacks a homely feel. There are signs of damage including dents to walls and doors and marks to the furniture in the child's bedroom. There is a significant delay with repairs. For example, damage to one bathroom door caused some time ago has not been repaired. Some furniture is old and unsightly. Staff have not provided the child with a comfortable home.

Staff have supported the child to settle into a new school and complete mock exams following a period away from education.

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

Managers and staff do not take appropriate measures to safeguard children.

Staff do not have sufficient understanding of child exploitation and the risks posed to the child. Guidance and risk assessments relating to the child's care and safety are insufficient and inaccurate. A lack of professional curiosity by staff about risks posed to the child when they are away from the home does not promote the child's safety and welfare.

Guidance about the action staff should take if the child is missing from the home is weak and confusing. There is no guidance about how staff should respond if the child is missing during the night. Consequently, staff practice is inconsistent as staff are unclear about their responsibilities. Weak guidance and poor staff practice leave the child vulnerable to harm of exploitation.

The manager and staff have not acted upon their responsibility to keep the child safe. Staff have not supported the child in understanding the risks associated with drugs and therefore the child remains vulnerable to significant harm. Staff do not understand or consistently implement guidance to inform the day-to-day monitoring of the premises. Consequently, safety issues have gone unnoticed and the child has not received the necessary support to reduce risk.

Leaders and managers do not take action to review the suitability of the location before children move into the home. Consequently, they lack awareness of the risks posed to children in the local area.

During the inspection, there were concerns about fire safety arrangements in the home. The responsible individual took immediate action to rectify these concerns during the inspection.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Significant weaknesses in managerial oversight have resulted in a systemic failure in how the staff safeguard the child and meet their care needs.

The management arrangements for the home are weak. The home has not had a registered manager since July 2020. Several managers have been appointed since this time. However, none have progressed to registration.

A new responsible individual commenced in the post in February 2024. However, they have not been safely recruited. There is no formal oversight of their performance and they have not received professional supervision since they commenced their role.

In the absence of a manager, the responsible individual is leading the day-to-day management of the home. The responsible individuals lack of capacity means that the monitoring of the operation of the home is poor and there is a lack of effective action to ensure the child's care is safe and meets their needs. A consultant has assisted in formulating a development plan for the home. However, new systems to monitor the care of children are ineffective. None of the requirements from the last inspection have been met.

Staff have received some training to help them develop their understanding and skills. However, gaps remain in areas pertinent to the child's safety and needs. Staff do not receive regular professional supervision. When supervision has taken place this does not support them to reflect on their learning from training or the effectiveness of their practice. Some staff have not achieved a relevant qualification within timescale.

The responsible individual has failed to ensure Ofsted are informed of significant concerns or changes to the staff team. The regulator has not been notified of all serious events. When Ofsted has been notified this is often late. The independent visitor has stepped

down and while a new visitor is being appointed there is no independent visitor. This compromises the external oversight of the operation of the home and the oversight of the safety of children.

Staff speak positively about the responsible individual and say she has helped them to rely less on each other for advice and support.

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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the children's home is a safe, nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of children.	12 July 2024
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare;	12 July 2024

help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child; (Regulation 7 (1)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that children's views, wishes and feelings in respect of their identity and their cultural and religious beliefs are listened to and respected.	
* 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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; 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 premises used for the purposes of the home are located so that children are effectively safeguarded;	7 June 2024

that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health; and

that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly.

(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii) (b) (c) (d) (e))

In particular, the registered person must ensure that there are systems in place to ensure that the quality of care is reviewed and action is taken to ensure children's safety. Staff must understand the risks posed to children and their roles and responsibilities to protect children, particularly in relation to missing, exploitation and drug use. Staff should take action to prevent harm to children and demonstrate professional curiosity as they do. Children's risk assessments should be clear and offer current information and guidance to staff.

The registered person must carry out a full review of the locality of the home, in particular any risks relating to child exploitation. This includes seeking the views of external professionals such as the missing and/or child exploitation co-ordinators for the police and local authorities.

This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.

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 have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;

ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;

28 June 2024

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; 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)(c)(e)(f)(g)(ii)(h)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff understand the quality of care to be provided to children, and take quick action to address any identified shortfalls. The registered person must also ensure that staff receive adequate training which equips them with the skills to meet the needs of the children they care for, in line with the homes statement of purpose. The registered person must ensure that there are effective monitoring and reviewing systems in place that identify any shortfalls effectively. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
A responsible individual must— have the capacity, experience and skills to supervise the management of the home, or the homes, in respect of which the responsible individual is nominated. (Regulation 26 (7)) This specifically relates to the responsible individual having adequate oversight of the home. In addition to having the skills to take effective action to improve the quality of care children receive. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	12 July 2024
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and (b) the registered provider—	12 July 2024

is an organisation or a partnership; (Regulation 27 (1)(a)(i)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
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. For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all staff including the responsible individual is safely recruited.	12 July 2024

This specifically relates to the manager ensuring that staff working in the home have the level 3 diploma within the required timescales. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all staff including the responsible individual receive formal supervision which enables them to reflect on their practice. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	12 July 2024
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 any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. A notification made under this regulation— must include details of— the matter; the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter; must be made or confirmed in writing. (Regulation 40(4)(a)(b)(e)(5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all serious events are notified to Ofsted and all other relevant	28 June 2024

professionals. They must ensure that they provide the full detail of these events in a timely manner. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a)(b) (4)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that an independent visitor is recruited to assist with the external scrutiny of the home. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	12 July 2024

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home's statement of purpose is kept under review. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.5)

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: 2586067

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Ivory Cottage Limited

Registered provider address: Ivory Cottage Ltd, Skytax, 37th Floor, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5AA

Responsible individual: Susan Riley

Registered manager: Post Vacant

Inspectors

Sarah Berry, Social Care Inspector
Nurul Kabir, Social Care Inspector

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