

2590934

Registered provider: Zone Central Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home registered with Ofsted in June 2020 and is privately run. It provides care for up to three children with learning disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2023 and is suitably qualified.

At the time of this inspection, two children were living in the home.

This inspection was brought forward in order to address specific concerns or allegations received by Ofsted.

Inspectors were aware during this inspection that a serious child protection allegation was being investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the allegations were considered alongside other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

Inspection dates: 24, 25 and 26 July 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 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 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/11/2023	Full	Good
12/10/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
05/07/2022	Full	Inadequate
08/06/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Children receive poor-quality care that is negatively impacting on their overall progress and experiences.

Staff do not set boundaries for children. This results in children having poor routines and structure. For example, children stay awake throughout the night and sleep during the day. Children do not have healthy and regular patterns for eating or have a varied diet. Leaders, managers and staff recognise that this has a negative impact on children. However, they have not taken effective action to support children to improve their day-to-day care and experiences.

Children are not accessing education. Leaders and managers reported that there is a plan for one child's education, but this has not yet started. Currently, there is no plan in place for the other child in the home. Staff are not providing children with opportunities for alternative educational experiences in the home while they are not in education. This is further impacted by children being asleep for most of the day.

Children do not engage in activities. Poor routines impact on the opportunity for children to take part in a variety of activities that they enjoy. Limited activities have taken place when the children are awake in the evenings, and these have included a trip to the cinema and going to a fast-food restaurant.

Children's bedrooms are in poor condition. Both children's wardrobes have been broken for some time and have not been repaired or replaced. One wardrobe is held together with brown tape and the door is missing. The back of the other wardrobe was in pieces on the floor during this inspection. Neither child has suitable storage for their clothes and some of their clothes are kept on the floor. One child's dressing table does not have the top attached and is therefore not fit for purpose. Curtains in one child's bedroom do not adequately block out the sunlight to support good sleep. Therefore, the child is using blankets and dressing gowns to cover the windows. Both children said that they have complained about the disrepair of their bedrooms. Leaders, managers and staff have not addressed these concerns in a timely way. As a result, children are unable to enjoy a homely environment.

Children develop good relationships with some staff. Children named staff who they are comfortable speaking to and who they trust. Children tell staff if they are worried. However, staff have not used this to support children to have good routines that would help them to enjoy structured and healthy lives.

Children have house meetings and planned conversations with staff to address important topics, such as their health and well-being. Although actions are agreed during these discussions, they are not always carried out. For example, a health appointment for one child was not followed up.

Key-working sessions are not effective. They do not support children to learn how to keep safe, or help them to develop their emotional or physical well-being. Key-work sessions are not based on children's individual needs. Additionally, they are not helping children to learn independent living skills.

The home's communal areas could be improved to make the home a more comfortable place for children to live. There are outstanding maintenance issues that leaders and managers are aware of. Additionally, suitable dining furniture is required to encourage children not to eat in their bedrooms as they currently do.

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

Safeguarding practices in the home are poor. Staff do not demonstrate that they have a sufficient knowledge and understanding of safeguarding procedures. For example, staff do not always recognise potential safeguarding concerns, and therefore fail to report them to leaders and managers. This prevents adequate safeguards from being put in place to protect children from harm.

Staff do not always follow children's agreed care plans and risk assessments. For example, children are not consistently supported by two staff throughout the night, as agreed in their care plans. Leaders and managers have failed to adequately identify shortfalls and inconsistencies in staff practice around the supervision of children.

Staff do not take effective action to reduce the risks to children. Children's online use and communication with others is not monitored by staff. Furthermore, children are using their phones throughout the night when they should be sleeping. Staff do not know who children are communicating with, which potentially increases the risks to children.

Staff do not have effective strategies in place to support children to have better routines. Staff actively engage with children throughout the night when they should be sleeping.

Incidents of children going missing from the home have reduced. However, children have a high level of staff supervision, which has been agreed by the professional network. Leaders, managers and staff are not advocating for children to be supported to have less supervision in the home or community.

Leaders and managers have appropriately notified Ofsted of serious incidents, as required. This includes providing updates when there have been changes to the actions they are taking. This ensures that the regulator has appropriate oversight of the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Management oversight of the home is poor. Leaders and managers have not adequately reviewed the quality of care that children are receiving to ensure that they receive good-

quality care that enables them to make good progress that promotes their health and well-being.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that there is effective oversight of staff practice and children's records. Leaders and managers are not clear about how the day-to-day staffing arrangements are carried out in line with children's care plans and required level of supervision. However, children's records show that staff are not always following children's care plans and that staff are unable to implement boundaries with them.

The registered manager and responsible individual are present in the home. However, staff said that leaders and managers are not always visible and available to support them, even when they are in the home. Because of this, staff said that they do not feel appropriately supported to do their jobs well. Furthermore, staff said that leaders and managers did not provide them with enough information to support a child following a serious allegation.

Staff receive supervision, but reported that it is sometimes done in an unplanned way. For example, staff said that a discussion with the registered manager to seek support or advice is sometimes formalised into a supervision meeting without their agreement. As a result, some staff did not feel that the supervision process was helping them to discuss important issues about children's care or to reflect on their practice.

Staff have been able to attend various training. However, managers do not regularly observe staff practice to assess the effectiveness of the training. This has resulted in inconsistencies in how staff support children.

Staff do not receive regular annual appraisals. One member of staff said that they have only had one appraisal after working in the home for over three years.

Due to the concerns raised at this inspection, a notice restricting accommodation has been issued and two compliance notices. The requirement made at the last inspection has not been met and is restated. Five additional requirements have been raised in relation to shortfalls found at this inspection. Leaders and managers have provided Ofsted with an immediate action plan with the actions they are taking to protect children and improve the quality of care that they receive.

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 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; 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;	30 August 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)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(c)(d)(e))) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that staff follow children's care plans and that staff have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. Furthermore, children's bedrooms must be clean and free from broken furniture to protect each child from avoidable hazards to their health and well-being.	
* 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; 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— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and	30 August 2024

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, leaders and managers must have adequate monitoring and reviewing systems in place to address poor practice and take effective action. Furthermore, leaders and managers must provide the right support to staff to ensure that they have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c)) In particular, staff must receive regular and effective supervision and appraisal.	30 August 2024
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— that staff— help each child to achieve the child’s education and training targets, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans; support each child’s learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible;	6 September 2024

that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(v)(viii)(b)) In particular, children should be provided with structured routines during school hours and have opportunities for educational activities when they are not in formal education.	
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— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— protect and promote each child's welfare; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect; help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult; make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice. The conditions are— that the care is approved, and kept under review throughout its duration, by the placing authority; that the care meets the child's needs.	6 September 2024

(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(ix) (3)(a)(b)(c)) In particular, staff must support children to develop skills to improve their well-being, and children should have consistent daily routines so that they can sleep and eat well and are alert during the day to take part in meaningful activities.	
The enjoyment and achievement standard is that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— develop the child’s interests and hobbies; participate in activities that the child enjoys and which meet and expand the child’s interests and preferences; and that each child has access to a range of activities that enable the child to pursue the child’s interests and hobbies. (Regulation 9 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(b)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that children are offered meaningful activities.	6 September 2024

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: 2590934

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Zone Central Ltd

Registered provider address: Zone Central Ltd, 4 Cedar Park, Cobham Road, Ferndown Industrial Estate, Wimborne BH21 7SF

Responsible individual: Dawn Quye-Joyce

Registered manager: Sarah Bonner

Inspectors

Thobekile Bandama, Social Care Inspector
Jo Tarbie, Social Care Inspector

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