

2591688

Registered provider: Mutual Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is one of two homes that are privately operated by a small company. The home is registered to provide care for two children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

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

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 October 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 25 April 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/04/2023	Full	Good
02/02/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
27/09/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This is a cosy and well-furnished home. New carpets that are due to be fitted will improve the overall look and feel of the property. Children's bedrooms are personalised and provide space for their personal belongings. The home meets the needs of the two children who currently live there. During the inspection, both children were seen and spoken to individually and alone. The registered manager was present in the home throughout the inspection.

Carers recognise the importance of positive family relationships for children. Children are supported to spend time having fun and maintaining relationships with their family in a safe way. Concerns in respect of family time are promptly addressed within the multi-agency arena. This has resulted in thorough planning to ensure that children's needs are met. Carers build and maintain positive relationships with children's family members. This has led to better outcomes for one child.

Carers work with education professionals to provide children with positive learning experiences. When children are not receiving an education, carers share information with other professionals and advocate for children's rights. When necessary, carers appropriately challenge others, ensuring that children's needs are considered and met. When children have not attended a formal education provision, carers consistently encourage children to engage in tutoring sessions and informal learning opportunities.

Children's health needs are met. Prompt action is taken to address the use of vapes. With children's agreement, referrals are made to external services to provide children with additional guidance and support when required. Carers recognise the importance of supporting children to maintain positive mental health. Concerns are raised with the appropriate professionals with the aim of securing the right services for children. When children are wary about attending appointments, carers support them to attend.

The quality of planning for children to move into the home is varied. Carers gain information from those who know children and plan thorough introductions. However, planning for one child to move in did not consider up-to-date information. Consideration of the impact of children's behaviours or other children was not thoroughly explored. Before action was taken to reduce the negative impact, one child was exposed to serious incidents.

Carers support children to have positive endings. Children are supported to understand why decisions about where they will live have been made. Their views are gained and considered in decision-making. One child has experienced an unplanned ending due to escalating and unmanageable levels of risk. Learning has been taken from this and action has been taken to address concerns in relation to poor information-sharing from other agencies.

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

The children who live in the home said that they feel safe. They said that carers spend time getting to know them, which has led to children being able to talk about their lives, wishes, feelings and concerns. Sensitive topics such as risk and personal relationships are addressed in a child-centred way, allowing children to know why certain decisions are made and why boundaries are put in place. Carers recognise the benefits of engaging children in positive activities. The children said that they are encouraged to do a wealth of activities, such as go-karting, going to the cinema and going for walks. Children's views are gained in relation to the planning of their day-to-day lives.

Carers have a good knowledge and understanding of risk. They are committed to keeping children safe. They know the risks that children face and work with children and other professionals to reduce them. Carers follow clearly written and up-to-date plans that provide a narrative of the child's life, experiences and actions required to keep them safe. Work to address concerns in relation to internet use utilises up-to-date monitoring technology. When actions taken to reduce and manage risk do not have the desired outcome, planning takes place to review and revise plans with the aim of keeping children safe.

Safeguarding concerns are investigated and monitored effectively. Informative logs are kept up to date. The use of chronologies and linking of documents allows carers to access relevant information quickly.

There have been some serious incidents in the home. During these instances, carers have followed plans and maintained boundaries with children in difficult circumstances. When necessary, action has been taken to ensure the safety of other children in the home. After incidents, carers talk to children. This supports children to know that they are safe and loved, and to reflect on their behaviours and the behaviours of others.

When restraint has been used, it has been appropriate. When children have gone missing from the home, carers react promptly to ensure their safety and return them to the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last inspection, a new manager has registered with Ofsted. He leads an experienced and effective management team that aspires to achieve the best possible outcomes for children. The registered manager has oversight of children's files and ensures that essential information is shared with carers. He is visible in the home and knows the children and the team of carers well.

Carers like working in the home. They spoke positively about the support that they receive from leaders and managers, particularly when they have experienced a long or difficult shift. Carers said that they are part of a strong team and feel valued by leaders

and managers. Carers talked about the children who live in the home and children who have left the home with a sense of commitment and fondness.

Managers provide carers with regular supervision. There is a clear focus on children and how carers are meeting their needs, as well as the development and well-being of carers. Carers openly discuss their concerns with managers. However, written recordings of supervision do not show the discussion and reflection that take place. This prevents these documents being used as a tool for reflection and ongoing development.

Team meetings are held regularly, providing the team as a whole the opportunity to discuss its practice. Written recordings of these meetings contain a wealth of information about children and the home. Actions are clearly set out and allocated. However, whether actions are not revisited to ensure they have been completed and the recordings lack details of discussion and reflection.

Concerns in relation to the practice of carers are managed appropriately. Where necessary, concerns are shared with external professionals, and additional guidance and advice on how to deal with concerns are gained and followed. Internal investigations are thorough and consider all of the information gained.

Recruitment practice ensures that checks necessary to determine whether carers are safe to work with children are completed.

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 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. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that robust evaluation and analysis of all available or required information is completed before a decision is made for a child to move into the home.	3 December 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff follow the home's policies and procedures to benefit the children who live there. There should be clear lines of accountability. In particular, the registered person should ensure that documents detailing supervisions and team meetings show the discussion and reflection that takes place. Also, that any actions resulting from team meetings are reviewed to ensure that they have been completed. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.20)

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: 2591688

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Mutual Care Ltd

Registered provider address: Northams, St. Marys Road, Portishead, Bristol, Avon BS20 6QP

Responsible individual: Lance Feldman

Registered manager: David Owen

Inspector

Carla Simkiss, Social Care Inspector

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