

2591688

Registered provider: Mutual Care Limited

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. It is situated in castle grounds, outside a city. At the time of the inspection, two children were living in the home.

The registered manager left the home in October 2022. A new manager has been appointed, who has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 February 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

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

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

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: 27 September 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/09/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

The home is warm and has a cosy feel. Communal areas are tailored to the needs of the children and provide space for relaxation and activities. Outside areas allow the children to take part in outdoor interests. While bedrooms are personalised, children are not provided with enough support to keep them hygienic and homely. This does not enable them to develop the skills necessary for adulthood. Work to repair some wooden windowsills is required due to them rotting.

One child expressed that they feel safe and like living at the home. They named a member of staff who they feel able to talk to. Many staff working at the home are new. The children have not received continuity of care and have limited access to carers who they have established relationships with. This is having a negative impact on the children.

Several cupboards and doors are locked, which prevents children's access to all areas of their home. The rationale for the need to do this is limited and alternative ways to store items have not been considered.

Children are supported to access interests and activities that they enjoy. Both children regularly attend school.

A social worker spoke positively to the inspector about the care provided to a child. They said that staff are supporting the child to manage their emotions well. A nurturing approach is used when staff speak to children about sensitive issues, the homes records reflect this positive approach.

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

Risk assessments clearly define identified risks and set out clear actions needed to reduce and manage these. However, the rating of risk does not always accurately portray the level of risk. This does not support staff to recognise the severity of concerns and risks to children.

There have been several incidents where staff have restrained children. When children have been restrained, the quality of recording has been good and reflective debriefs have taken place. On one occasion, a floor hold was used. Use of this restraint was inappropriate and potentially dangerous. It is likely to have escalated the incident further.

Children are not provided with sufficient support and guidance to learn about risk or develop self-care, healthy lifestyle and relationship skills. Staff have not been provided with the necessary skills to support children effectively in these areas. The

current external therapeutic service does not carry out direct work with children and is not meeting the learning and support needs of staff.

Recording systems are chaotic, and important documents are difficult to find. The home does not have copies of some documents that are essential to understanding and meeting children's needs.

Incidents have been promptly reported to the local authority designated officer. An internal investigation in relation to allegations against a member of staff is robust and appropriate action has been taken. However, internal investigations have not been carried out for all allegations.

When incidents involving the children have occurred, information-sharing and communication with other professionals have been of a good standard and have supported the ongoing care of the children. Management oversight of incidents is good and debriefs are carried out with children.

Measures are in place to prevent children from accessing inappropriate internet content. Staff consistently monitor use and record daily checks. Breaches of the protective system are quickly identified, and protective measures are promptly implemented.

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

Oversight of the home is not good enough at this stage. The acting manager has submitted an application to Ofsted for registration.

The statement of purpose includes incorrect information and is not fully up to date in respect of staffing.

Overall, children's written plans and assessments are thorough. However, at times, language is institutionalised and unclear, which does not support the reader to understand what events have taken place. If children were to access their records, it is likely that they would not understand some content and narrative.

Several children's case records are written in the first-person narrative from the child's perspective. Children did not create the documents or agree with what has been written.

Following a child making a complaint against staff, the registered manager carried out a thorough review and identified areas for learning and improvement. Not all the identified areas for improvement have been implemented. No response was provided to the child following the resolution of their complaint.

Recruitment practice is of a good standard. All required checks are carried out before staff are employed. The home employs an adequate number of staff to meet the needs of the children currently living in the home. Agency staff are not used.

Where improvements to the exterior of the home are needed, management has communicated with outside agencies with the aim to complete the work.

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— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— 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; provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; provide to children personal items that are appropriate for their age and understanding; 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)(a)(b)(vi)(vii)(viii)(c)(i)(ii)) In particular, ensure that staff help children to develop skills for adulthood.	3 April 2023

Ensure that children are provided with adequate storage and are supported to store and display cherished, personal items.	
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child’s relevant plans; understand the child’s health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child’s health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child’s age and understanding; take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child’s health and well-being needs; and understand and develop skills to promote the child’s well-being; that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(c)) In particular, ensure that the home has copies of health plans and assessments for children, that these are reviewed and are the basis of the child’s individual health plan. Ensure that children are supported to have a well-balanced diet and healthy lifestyle. Ensure that children and staff have access to appropriate psychological advice and support when required.	3 April 2023

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

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—

that staff—

meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans;

help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;

encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding;

communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding;

help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful;

help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship;

strive to gain each child's respect and trust;

understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children;

are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same.

(Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x))

3 April 2023

In particular, ensure that staff develop skills to talk to children about personal development and relationships.	
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; 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 acting in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(vi)(vii)) In particular, ensure that risk assessments accurately portray the level of risk. In addition, ensure that internal actions and investigations taken by the home in response to an allegation are clearly recorded and easily accessible.	6 March 2023
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 work as a team where appropriate;	3 April 2023

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)) In particular, ensure that staff provide children continuity of care and have the experience and skills to meet their needs.	
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (1) (3)(a)(b))	3 April 2023
Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing— injury to any person (including the child); serious damage to the property of any person (including the child); or a child who is accommodated in a secure children's home from absconding from the home. Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2))	6 March 2023
The registered person must ensure that the following items, which may be kept in electronic form, are kept in an accessible manner— (Regulation 38)	3 April 2023
Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must establish a procedure for considering complaints made by or on behalf of children.	3 April 2023

The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (1) (3))

In particular, ensure that information is explicitly recorded which details how children are involved in the complaints process and how they are informed of the outcome of their complaint.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. In particular, carefully consider the appropriateness of recording the child's information using first-person narrative. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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 Limited

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

Responsible individual: Lance Feldman

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Carla Simkiss, Social Care Inspector

Polly Soper, Social Care Inspector

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