

2592750

Registered provider: Break

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This charity-run home provides care for up to two children who may have experienced neglect, abuse or trauma, along with family and placement breakdowns.

The registered manager left in September 2022.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 December 2022

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: 20 July 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/07/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Two children were living at the home at the time of this inspection. They have made good progress in different areas and have positive experiences. However, shortfalls in how well children are helped and protected have reduced the overall quality of care.

Staff's support for children's education has been mixed. One child has previously struggled with their educational engagement. Staff have worked with other professionals to ensure that a suitable education provision has been put in place for them. Staff have helped the child to attend education. When there have been challenges for the child, staff have worked closely with school staff to help overcome these. However, for another child, there has been a lack of progress in relation to them accessing educational opportunities. Although the child has found employment, staff have failed to work in line with plans to ensure that the child is encouraged to engage in education or training.

Children build positive and trusting relationships with staff. This has helped them to become more settled over time. Children like living at the home and enjoy spending time with staff. One child previously had a high number of placements that had broken down. He has now been at the home for a significant time. The child's social worker said that the trusting relationships that the child has with staff have been vital in ensuring that the placement has been successful.

Managers and staff plan for children to move to and from the home effectively. Impact assessments consider the needs of the child living at the home as well as those of the child moving in. This helps managers to consider how effectively they can meet children's needs and put strategies in place to manage risks. Staff regularly work with one child, who is due to move on from the home, to help them to gain the skills that they will need to live more independently.

Children access a good range of activities. At their request, one child has been on holiday to Spain and another child went to Cornwall. This has given children positive experiences and they enjoyed their time away with staff.

The home is appropriately furnished and well maintained. However, walls throughout the home are quite bare and this affects how homely it feels.

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

One child had a history of substance misuse before moving to the home. Staff have failed to ensure that there are clear plans on how the child will be helped to understand the risks of substance misuse. There is limited evidence of work taking

place with the child in this area. Although staff are clear that the child is not to use illegal substances at the home, there has not been a consistent message about the dangers of doing so elsewhere.

Managers have failed to identify risks relating to one child's use of a moped. On one occasion, the child was involved in an accident. Managers failed to explore whether the child may have been under the influence of a substance at the time of the accident, despite evidence suggesting that this was a possibility. No strategies have been identified to manage this risk and records are unclear as to whether this may be regular behaviour from the child. A failure to appropriately assess and respond to this risk has left the child, and potentially others, at risk of harm.

Some risks for children have reduced. One child was reported missing from the home relatively regularly in the past. Staff responded to these incidents well; they were proactive in trying to locate the child. Managers have worked alongside the child's social worker to review the child's missing-from-home protocol, taking into account the child's age and risks. There have not been any incidents of the child going missing for a significant time. Allowing the child some more independence, in a planned way, has helped them to be more trusting of staff and stick to agreed boundaries in relation to their free time.

Staff manage behavioural incidents well. At times of children's distress, staff respond in line with children's plans and in ways that help them to feel calm. This helps to ensure that incidents do not escalate. There have not been any incidents of restraint, despite relatively frequent incidents when children have shown aggression towards staff.

Managers respond to safeguarding concerns appropriately. When needed, they have made referrals to the local authority designated officer promptly and worked alongside them to ensure that concerns are effectively managed. Staff were clear about the need to share safeguarding concerns with managers without delay. However, some staff said that if children were to make an allegation against the manager, they would discuss this with less-senior staff in the first instance. This is not in line with the home's safeguarding policy, which states that concerns should be raised with more-senior staff.

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

The registered manager left their post in September 2022. The new manager moved from another home within the organisation to this home. He is suitably experienced and qualified to level 5. A clear transition plan was put in place for the manager leaving and new manager arriving. This helped to ensure that children's and staff's anxieties relating to the changes were minimised.

Monitoring of the home has not always been effective. Although managers provide oversight of incidents, this has not always considered the wider context around them. This has led to managers failing to identify risks and mitigate them. Shortfalls

in record-keeping have not been identified and have contributed to managers not identifying patterns of some behaviours. In addition, the manager has failed to ensure that staff always care for children in line with their plans, and that the home remains a homely and child-friendly environment. Poor monitoring has failed to ensure that shortfalls are identified and addressed.

Staff are well supported by managers. Managers provide a visible presence at the home. This helps them to understand the strengths and areas of development for the team. Regular supervision sessions help staff to consider how effectively they are caring for children and areas in which this can be improved.

Staff are supported through the organisation's therapeutic service. Therapeutic input in team meetings and through clinical supervision for managers helps staff to consider the trauma that children have experienced and how this affects them.

Managers have good links with other professionals and agencies. External professionals said that communication from staff is good and that managers are proactive in discussing any challenges relating to children's care. Managers have advocated well for one child, who is due to move to more-independent living. Managers have appropriately challenged other professionals to ensure that suitable accommodation is found for the child. This has contributed to a clear plan for the child, which will be supported by staff at the home.

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 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 understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(iv)(x))	23 January 2023
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; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(vi)(vii))	2 January 2023

In particular: ensure that all risks for children are identified and strategies put in place to reduce them; ensure that children are helped to understand risks relating to substance misuse; and ensure that staff understand how to respond to allegations.	
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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) In particular, ensure effective oversight of the management of risks to children, record-keeping, whether children's educational engagement and progress are reflective of their plans, and the home environment.	23 January 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a homely, domestic environment. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: 2592750

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Break

Registered provider address: Schofield House, 1 Spar Road, Norwich, Norfolk
NR6 6BX

Responsible individual: Rachel Leslie

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Joe Cox, Social Care Inspector

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