

2594233

Registered provider: Children & Adolescents Placement Provisions Ltd

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private provider and is registered to provide care for up to four children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

There has been no registered manager since the 22 November 2022. The acting manager has applied to register with Ofsted. They were present throughout this inspection.

There are currently four children living in the home. Social care regulatory inspectors spent time with three children on inspection. However, only one child spoke to them directly.

Inspection date: 11 September 2024

Date of last inspection: 7 May 2024

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspectors evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We identified the following serious and widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection:

- Allegations against staff are not being reported and managed in line with safeguarding protocols.
- Risk assessments for children are ineffective in managing and identifying risk, particularly around substance misuse and exploitation.
- Room searches are not being undertaken in response to risk of substances, fire lighting equipment and sharp objects being bought into the home.
- Episodes of children going missing from care and absences from the home are not being effectively recorded. Some absences are not being recorded and shared with other professionals.
- Damage to the home is not being repaired in a timely way.

There are currently four children living in the home. The serious and widespread concerns identified in the help and protection of children and the effectiveness of leaders and managers at this children's home are having a negative impact on the care and progress of the children who live here. One child has made progress from their starting point. This child is on a semi-independence plan and is due to start a college placement.

Three of the children are not currently engaging well in education. These children do not have positive or structured daily routines. Staff are not effective in implementing routines and boundaries for children, and as a result, children are not settled and are not being supported to keep themselves safe.

Children are not benefiting from healthy sleep routines and stay in their bedrooms for most of the day and are awake most nights. This has led to several concerning incidents overnight where children have gone absent or missing and there are concerns about substance misuse. Children are not being supported by external health agencies or staff with these concerns.

Staff are starting to build relationships with the children. One child described staff as 'alright'. Children enjoy it when staff take them swimming. Staff and children will spend time together in the home.

One child shared that staff had helped them to reconnect and stay in communication with their family. Staff did communicate with another child's parent when their child was missing from the home.

Allegations against staff made by children are not being reported and managed appropriately in line safeguarding protocols. For example, the manager was informed by the police of an allegation made by a child. This incident was not

reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer until three days later and was not reported to the child's social worker. The manager commenced an internal investigation without consultation from the child's placing authority and local authority designated officer. This undermines the safeguarding process and does not promote a positive safeguarding culture.

A child made an allegation about staff to the inspectors, and this was shared with the manager and social worker. This allegation related to a serious incident in the home and the child had not been given the opportunity to reflect and discuss with staff. This was a missed opportunity for the child to express their views and to raise the concerns that they had about staff conduct during this incident.

Staff described children as regularly smoking cannabis and suspect this is being smoked and brought into the home. Despite these concerns, staff are not completing room searches, because children refuse to let them enter their rooms. Some staff shared that they felt fearful of doing room searches because they fear the response they receive from children. As a result, staff do not have the confidence to protect children from harm.

Staff do not take appropriate action to minimise incidents of substance misuse and exploitation risks. For example, staff observed one child preparing to use illegal substances in the home. Staff failed to use professional curiosity to understand how this child had obtained illegal substances, despite their care plan requiring them to be fully supervised by staff.

Fire safety arrangements for children are inadequate. For example, one child set a fire in the garden and then proceeded to set a second fire inside the home. Staff did not intervene to prevent the fires from being set. In addition, some children are known to smoke in their bedrooms. However, there is no record of room searches being carried out in order to remove fire lighting equipment. Children do not participate in fire drills, and targeted work has not been completed with them to help them understand the risks.

Children are regularly going missing from care or absent from the home and some absences are not being recorded or reported to relevant professionals, because children are returning after a short period of time. Professional curiosity has not been used to consider what children may be doing during these periods of absence. Exploitation and substance misuse risks between children are not well considered or reflected on.

Children's risk assessments are ineffective and do not adequately reflect current and known concerns. Window restrictors are regularly broken and not replaced in a timely way, and this allows children to leave the home via their bedroom windows without staff being aware. This places children at risk of harm.

The manager of the home has tried to implement some change and improvement since the last inspection. Senior managers have not provided effective oversight or quality assurance systems to support the manager in the development of the home.

There is a lack of understanding of the quality of care being provided and the impact on children's progress and experiences.

The manager's oversight of significant incidents is weak. For example, a knife was found recently in one child's bedroom. The manager failed to put measures in place to reduce similar incidents from reoccurring, such as staff carrying out room searches. This is necessary given that other children have known risks relating to the use of knives.

Incident reports are not always completed in a timely manner, and some are completed days after the event. Staff are not being supported to understand the importance of completing incident reports in a timely manner. This causes delays in the manager providing their evaluation and oversight of incidents and taking appropriate action in response. Senior managers have not identified this as a concern, because monitoring systems have not been effectively implemented.

Staff have access to a wide range of training. However, not all staff have completed additional training that would provide them with additional knowledge and skills in supporting children with complex needs. Staff spoken to said they were happy and felt supported in their roles.

The manager has not notified the regulator about all significant incidents that have happened, including allegations about staff. This prevents the regulator from having a clear oversight of risk factors that may be impacting on the home.

A restriction notice has been served on the home. This is to prevent any new children from moving in and will give leaders and managers time to implement systems and processes that may improve the standard of care practices.

Not all the previous requirements were reviewed during this inspection and were reinstated. Some requirements have not been met and have been restated. Two compliance notices have been issued to address concerns in the protection of children and leadership and management. The recommendations were not reviewed on this inspection.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/05/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/05/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
05/07/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
18/05/2022	Full	Inadequate

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; 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;	20 Oct 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)(d)(e)) In particular, this relates to ensuring that children's risk assessments reflect current and known risks, particularly around missing and substance misuse, and are implemented. It also relates to allegations being made against staff that are not reported and managed in line with legislation and guidance. 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; 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)(f)(h)) In particular, this relates to leaders and managers providing quality assurance and scrutiny of the home, providing staff with relevant training to improve their knowledge of	20 Oct 2024

children's needs and ensuring that monitoring systems are in place to make sure improvements are implemented to the standards in the home. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans; and seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c)(d)) This specifically relates to working with local authorities to build relationships with children's families to enable working together to meet children's needs and ensure their well-being. This also related to finding effective strategies to ensure that children's health needs are met by relevant professionals and, in situations where the provider is unhappy with services, escalation of concerns happens in a timely way.	20 Oct 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—	20 Oct 2024

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; and understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(i)(ii)(iii)) This specifically relates to ensuring that children are regularly engaged in education and to helping them overcome any difficulties they have in achieving this.	
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must — ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practicable, that children are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. (Regulation 25 (1)(d)) This specifically relates to ensuring that children take part in fire evacuation practices and have regular discussions about how to exit the home in the event of a fire. This requirement was set at the last inspection and is restated.	20 Oct 2024
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)(b)) In particular, this relates to the responsible individual providing regular support and oversight to the home to help development and improvement of the standards in the home.	20 Oct 2024
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— any incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious;	20 Oct 2024

there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; and there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(c)(e))	
The registered person must ensure that the following items, which may be kept in electronic form, are kept in an accessible manner— children’s case records (see regulation 36); (Regulation 38 (i)) This particularly refers to ensuring that all children’s records are available and accessible to staff or relevant professionals.	20 October 2024

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming, supportive, and which provides appropriate boundaries in relation to their behaviour. Homes must also meet children’s basic day to day needs and physical necessities. Staff should seek to meet the child’s basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met – doing so is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child and value them as an individual. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.7)
- The registered person should ensure that just as in a family home, children should be able to access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child’s needs. Limits on privacy and access may only be put in place to safeguard each child in the home (regulation 21(c)(i)). Any decisions to limit a child’s access to any area of the home and any modifications to the environment of the home, must only be made where this is intended to safeguard the child’s welfare. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child’s needs, be properly recorded and be kept under regular review. Information on restraint and deprivation of liberty is contained in the protection of children section of the Guide from paragraph 9.41. (Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- The registered person should ensure that children’s homes staff should seek to identify and provide appropriate opportunities for children to develop themselves in accordance with their wishes and feelings and as part of the home’s plan for

their care. Each child's talents and interests should be understood and nurtured, with children selecting activities based on their personal preferences and abilities, so far as is reasonable. Staff should also support children to try activities that are 'new' for them, where appropriate. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.4)

- The registered person should encourage children to share any concerns about their care or other matters as soon as they arise. Children must be able to take up issues or make a complaint with support and be reminded of the complaints procedure as necessary. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.13)
- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2594233

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Children & Adolescents Placement Provisions Ltd

Registered provider address: Barratt House Office G3a, Kingsthorpe Road,
Northampton NN2 6EZ

Responsible individual: Nadine Morgan

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Chloe Harvey, Social Care Inspector
Sarah Orriss, Social Care Inspector

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