

2595182

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home that provides care for up to three children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted on 19 October 2020.

The registered manager post has been vacant since March 2022. A new manager has been appointed and has submitted an application to register with Ofsted.

There was one child living at the home at the time of this inspection.

Inspection date: 19 January 2023

Date of last inspection: 27 September 2022

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

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

The inspector 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 did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The care of children

Managers recognise that there is still more work to be done to improve practice and the quality of care. Nevertheless, good progress has been made in meeting the requirements and recommendations raised at the last inspection. As a result, children are making good progress.

Staff have built positive relationships with the child currently living at the home. The child reported that everything is going well for them.

The long-term plan was for the child to move closer to her family. However, the child has said that they want to continue to live at this home as they feel settled at the home and at school. The manager has agreed to help the child to obtain the support of an independent advocate who can ensure that the child's views are considered when decisions about their future are made.

Leaders and managers have successfully recruited a permanent staff team. The use of agency staff is therefore no longer required, and children are provided with consistent and stable care.

The safety of children

Safeguarding practice has improved since the last inspection.

There has been one incident of self-harm, which was managed well. Room searches are carried out when necessary to remove dangerous items and prevent further incidents of self-harm. The child was involved in creating a safety plan around self-harm to ensure that appropriate strategies are in place to manage the risk.

Staff manage incidents well and they have not required police assistance to intervene and support them to manage children's behaviour. Incident records are detailed and provide a clear description of what happened and the action taken by staff to manage behaviour.

There have been no episodes of children going missing from home. Nevertheless, children have individualised missing-from-care protocols that include the action that staff must take to manage and respond to this risk. However, the protocols do not provide specific timescales for staff to report children missing to the police and relevant others. Furthermore, the grab pack information for one child was not included in the child's record. This potentially compromises the effectiveness of staff practice should this risk occur.

When allegations are made by children, they are addressed promptly and appropriately. Staff spoken to were able to demonstrate a good understanding of what to do if an allegation is made and of whistle-blowing procedures.

The manager is now responsible for the recruitment of new staff. Safer recruitment and employment practices have been strengthened to ensure that staff files include a written explanation of any gaps in employment history. However, the Disclosure and Barring Service check for one member of staff was not verified before they started their employment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

The manager is committed to making improvements to ensure that the needs of children are met. A deputy manager has recently been appointed to support the manager in the home's improvement journey. Leaders and managers have met three of the requirements raised at the last inspection and two are restated.

The frequency of supervision provided to staff has improved since the last inspection. Staff, including new staff, have access to relevant training in important areas of practice. This supports staff development and their ability to meet the needs of the children in their care.

Leaders and managers have ensured that the local authority care plans have been obtained from the placing authorities. This helps staff to fully understand the needs of children in their care.

Leaders and managers have reviewed the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises. The review now contains up-to-date information. However, although attempts have been made to consult with safeguarding partners, no responses have been received.

Ofsted has been notified of all significant incidents. This supports the regulator's external oversight of the home.

Leaders and managers have made improvements in the quality of some records. However, further improvement is required. For example, the daily logs do not include information about a significant incident for one child.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/09/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
28/04/2021	Full	Good

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 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 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(vi)(b)) In particular, this refers to the registered person ensuring that missing-from-care protocols provide staff with clear strategies to manage risk and that grab pack information is included in the children's files.	19 February 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.	19 March 2023

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, this refers to the registered person ensuring that review and monitoring systems lead to consistent improvement in the quality and consistency of records.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that they maintain good employment practice, as set out in regulations 31 to 33. In particular, this relates to ensuring that all appropriate checks are completed before staff are allowed to work in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2595182

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Responsible individual: Lynette Hitchen

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Aneta Wasilewska, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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