

2623791

Registered provider: SBL Care Services (UK) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This service is owned and managed by a private provider. The home provides care and support for one child.

The manager has been in post since the home was registered in April 2021.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspection of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 21 to 22 July 2021

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: Not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: Not applicable

Recent inspection history

Not previously inspected

Inspection judgements

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

This is a newly registered home. Since the home opened, the staff have provided care for two children. One child currently lives at this home. Outcomes for children have been varied. Staff were unable to effect sufficient change in one child's risk-taking and criminal behaviour. The decision was made for the child to be moved out of the home due to increased periods of going missing from the home. Notice has been served on the current child as staff are concerned about their ability to keep him safe.

The care and support children receive are not yet good enough. Children have high levels of supervision and regular, good-quality key-work sessions provided by staff. However, children's engagement and progress vary, and they often leave the home in an unplanned way. This does not enhance their life prospects.

Although children are routinely praised for their behaviours, there is little oversight by managers to evaluate whether children are making progress holistically. This lack of evaluation means that children are not given the opportunity to reflect on their progress or enabled to set goals that they can work toward.

Children do not have daily routines and boundaries in place, and some children remain in bed until early afternoon. Staff struggle to consistently support children to engage throughout the day. This does not help children to access the support available to them and may impact on their future opportunities beyond living at the home.

Staff help children to maintain their relationships with family members. A parent told the inspector that they value this staff input. Staff are sensitive to the complexities of the child's family visits and are flexible to the needs of the whole family. This support means that children maintain family links that are crucial to their sense of identity.

The home is spacious and comfortable. Rooms are decorated well and are homely. A child said, 'The home is nice, better than other homes I have lived in. The staff do look for me when I don't come home, and they will check I'm OK when they find me.'

Social workers and one parent spoken to as part of this inspection gave positive feedback. They said that children have positive relationships with staff. However, there can be delays in information being readily available.

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

Children are not yet receiving good enough help and protection, but there are no serious failures that leave them either being harmed or at risk of harm.

Staff do not always identify and manage risks in the home to keep children safe. On occasions, a child has returned to the home and appeared to be under the influence of unknown substances. Although the child has presented as unwell, medical advice has not been consistently sourced. In addition, the child's risk assessment states that room searches should be conducted if staff have information to indicate that the child is under the influence of unknown substances. However, staff have not consistently followed the strategies in place.

Children's risk assessments and behaviour management plans are in place. However, not all staff regularly review or read these documents. Documentation within the home is both contradictory and confusing; particularly the procedures for staff to follow when children are reported as missing from home.

Children are not enabled to recognise and respond to risk in an age-appropriate way because structured discussions about risk do not take place regularly with the children. This prevents children from learning how to keep themselves safe.

Measures of control and discipline are not consistently evaluated for effectiveness. Records do not provide sufficient detail of the measure used, nor do they include the child's view. Some discipline measures, such as sanctions, are not recorded at all. They are not, therefore, compliant with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015.

Despite there being a stable team of staff who are passionate and committed, the outcomes for some of the children remain poor. The registered manager does not always direct staff to ensure that they are promoting a child's welfare and reducing the child's levels of risk. As a result, potential risks have not been managed as well as they should have been, to keep children and others safe.

The safer recruitment policy and procedures are enhancing the children's welfare and safety. Consistent safer recruitment practice is ensuring that all staff are rigorously vetted before they start to work at the home.

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

The registered manager has been in post since the home opened in April 2021. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions and government guidance, he has had to go into isolation for over 20 days. This has limited the time he has been present in the home.

The registered manager has not used the home's monitoring and reviewing processes to ensure that all records are up to date, used in a consistent way and accurately reflect risk. Some records were of a good quality and demonstrated the skills of the staff. However, the registered manager has not analysed and evaluated all records. As a result, opportunities are being missed to improve the outcomes for the children and to develop the home.

Some records about individual children were not recorded in a non-stigmatising way. This is not helpful to the child should they want to read their paperwork now or in the future. Staff have not considered how this could affect children when they read their files.

Staff have received supervision and training and are invited to team meetings. However, records of these events are not all kept up to date, and the quality of the recording in these documents is variable. Despite this, staff said that they are supported by the manager and do have opportunities to reflect on practice and develop their individual skills and knowledge.

Rotas do not clearly show which staff were on duty and the times that they were coming on and leaving shifts. When changes have been made to the staff working in the home, due to sickness, rotas have been updated with limited information. Therefore, rotas do not reflect the actual staff on shift and the hours worked.

The lack of rigour from the registered manager has not helped the home to sufficiently protect children and maintain good enough standards of care. More effective systems are needed to ensure that the safety and well-being of the children are promoted at all times.

The external monitoring systems have not identified the areas of improvement required before this inspection. Reports lack evaluation and do not demonstrate that monitoring is carefully considering the systems in place to keep children safe.

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; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(vi)(vii)) Specifically, risk assessments should comprehensively identify and focus on current and emerging risks and provide the staff with clear strategies on how to respond to risk.	3 September 2021
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;	3 September 2021

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; 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)(d)(h)) This is specifically in relation to improving the registered manager's oversight of the home's records and the staff's training.	
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. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)) In particular, pre-admission planning should robustly consider the risks and needs of each child, and how these will be managed to minimise the risk to any child.	3 September 2021
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ('the behaviour management policy') which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (2))	3 September 2021
The registered person must maintain records ('case records') for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and	3 September 2021

are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))	
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b)) In particular, ensure that the records include a copy of the staff duty roster of persons working at the home, a record of the actual rotas worked and a record of any person who works at any time at the home, including the registered manager.	3 September 2021
The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (4)(a)(b))	3 September 2021

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: 2623791

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: SBL Care Services (UK) Limited

Registered provider address: 161 Preston Road, Lytham St. Annes FY8 5AY

Responsible individual: Anthony Wilding

Registered manager: Michael Swift

Inspector

Michelle Edge, Social Care Inspector

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