

# 2624784

Registered provider: Care2Care Children's Home Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home provides care for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties.

The home registered in April 2021. The first child was admitted to the home on 28 May 2021.

The home has not had a registered manager since 19 November 2021. A new manager started working in the home in January 2022. The manager informed us of their attention to apply to register with Ofsted as soon as they have gathered all the required information.

This is the first inspection of this children's home.

### Inspection dates: 2 and 3 March 2022

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| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>requires improvement to be good</b> |
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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 applicable

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** not applicable

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** not applicable

## Inspection judgements

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

The caring attitudes of staff lead to children having overall positive experiences. However, staff's abilities to form trusting relationships with children with complex needs are limited. One child said that if he had concerns he would not talk with any staff in the home.

Regular key-working sessions and children's meetings give children opportunities to express their views and feelings. However, staff are not always effective in engaging children. For example, one child stays in his bedroom almost all of the time.

Children's attendance in education and their learning attainments are variable. One child is doing well at school and has clear plans for his future. However, some children have remained out of education for several months while living at this home. The lack of education undermines children's learning and life chances.

Children do not have the privacy that they should. Staff regularly search children's bedrooms, even when there are no concerns that warrant this, such as substance misuse or concerns about weapons. This practice is intrusive and unnecessary.

The main entrance door has an alarm fitted, which makes a loud sound every time the door is opened. The required records are not in place to support the use of surveillance in the home. Additionally, the kitchen is locked at night, without a risk assessment in place to support this restrictive action. All of these measures detract from the home as a domestic and family-like environment.

The communal areas are spacious, comfortable and well maintained. One child was provided with a new bed during the inspection, after the headboard on his old bed had been broken for several weeks. A number of environmental shortfalls were resolved during the inspection, after the inspector pointed them out to the leaders and managers of the home.

There is plenty of fresh food available for children. Children enjoy cooking and developing their life skills. They are able to choose meals that reflect their culture, and have their other cultural needs met by the home's diverse staff team.

Staff promote children's positive relationships with their parents, friends and mentors. For example, staff recently welcomed one child's sister for a takeaway dinner. Staff work with parents to help them to develop further their relationships with children. Parents talked positively about the home.

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

Sound risk assessments and positive behaviour support plans result in children's increased safety. Children's behaviours improve and they go missing from care less often as they settle in the home. This is a great achievement for them and it means that they are much safer than they used to be.

In the past, there were some incidents of peer-on-peer abuse among children. Staff dealt robustly with these incidents and there have been no further concerns of this nature.

There are a number of areas of staff safeguarding knowledge and practices that require improvement to be good. These weaknesses increase the risk of children not being safeguarded effectively.

Despite weekly health and safety checks of children's bedrooms, staff failed to notice that a child disabled a window restrictor in his bedroom on the top floor. This increased the risk of him jumping on the roof underneath or falling through the wide-open window. The issue was resolved quickly but it is of concern that, prior to the inspection, the staff did not notice the danger and did not talk with the child about his physical safety.

Some staff have a limited understanding of online safety. This increases the risks of staff not being able to safeguard children from online risks. This is a concern, as some children in the home have a strong online presence.

Some staff do not have a working knowledge of all aspects of the home's procedure for dealing with allegations. For example, one staff member did not know who to contact if an allegation was made against any of the home's leaders and managers. The lack of staff knowledge increases risks to children.

There are some further concerns about the staff's safeguarding knowledge. Some staff have a limited understanding of child criminal exploitation. Only a few staff have completed training in first aid, physical interventions and behaviour management.

The safer recruitment procedure is not followed fully and this increases risks to children. The provider does not ask all previous employers for confirmation of the reasons why employment ended, when those roles included working with children and vulnerable adults. However, the provider obtains all other required staff information, including two professional references, before new staff start working at the home.

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

Leaders, managers and staff are highly committed to children and want the best for them. The provider has made financial resources available to fulfil the home's statement of purpose. However, starting a new home during the COVID-19 pandemic has come with challenges, which slowed down the realisation of the provider's ambitious vision for this new children's home.

The change in the management team came after the extended absence of the registered manager. The deputy manager acted in the role of manager until a new manager was recruited. There was a point when the managers, staff members and one child all tested positive for COVID-19 and had to self-isolate.

The provider has struggled to recruit suitable staff. None of the home's staff are suitably qualified. The lack of experience and knowledge on the team is the main weakness of the home. This weakness affects the quality of care that staff are able to provide to children with complex needs.

Staff talked positively about the management support; however, the records of staff induction and supervision are sporadic. The training covers a good range of topics but it has been mainly online. Probationary appraisals are not always completed in a timely manner.

To maintain appropriate staffing levels, the home relies on the regular use of agency staff. There are no arrangements in place for the agency staff to receive systematic induction and supervision from the leaders and managers at the home. This has the potential to result in inconsistent care practices in the home, particularly as some agency staff work on their own at night.

The home does not always provide stability in children's lives. All three placements that have ended since the home opened had unplanned endings, which happened because staff were unable to meet those children's needs.

The quality of record-keeping is inconsistent and this undermines effective monitoring. The children's register has gaps and the staff register has not been maintained. Leaders and managers struggled to provide some information at the inspection in a timely manner. Leaders and managers know children well but do not demonstrate that they quality assure all aspects of the service.

The new manager has brought enthusiasm and competencies to the home and in one staff's words, 'innovation and creativity'. In a short period of time, the manager has introduced some improvement initiatives. For example, a child helped with the recruitment of new staff by asking the questions which children consider to be the most important.

The home benefits from the external scrutiny provided by an independent person. This professional's monthly monitoring reports aid the development of 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     |
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| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person.<br/>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(v))</p> <p>This specifically relates to making sure that staff are suitably skilled for their safeguarding role and have a better understanding and knowledge of child criminal exploitation and online safety.</p> | 1 April 2022 |
| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>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.<br/>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(d))</p> <p>This specifically relates to making sure that any risks of falling from a window are assessed and minimised, and that the health and safety arrangements are kept under review.</p>                                                                                                    | 1 April 2022 |

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| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(c)(d)(e))</p> <p>This specifically relates to making sure that within the team there are at least some staff who are suitably qualified, experienced and skilled for their roles.</p> | <p>1 June 2022</p>  |
| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>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))</p> <p>This specifically relates to making sure that records are consistently kept and that the registered person monitors all aspects of the service effectively.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p>1 April 2022</p> |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>the privacy of children is appropriately protected;</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p>1 April 2022</p> |

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| <p>children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and</p> <p>any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises—</p> <p>is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home;</p> <p>is necessary and proportionate;</p> <p>is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and</p> <p>allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21(a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))</p> <p>This specifically relates to making sure that room searches are conducted only when necessary to safeguard children and that restrictions to children accessing the kitchen at night are reviewed in the same light.</p>                                                                                                                            |              |
| <p>The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if—</p> <p>the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children;</p> <p>the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance;</p> <p>so far as reasonably practicable in the light of the child's age and understanding, the child is informed in advance of the intention to do the monitoring or surveillance; and</p> <p>the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d))</p> <p>This specifically relates to making sure that the use of the main entrance door alarm is reviewed and that it is used only when all requirements for its use have been satisfied.</p> | 1 April 2022 |
| <p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 1 April 2022 |

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| <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children’s home; or</p> <p>if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home,</p> <p>if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a) (3)(d))</p> <p>This specifically relates to making sure that if a person has previously worked in a position involving work with children or vulnerable adults, verification is obtained, so far as reasonably practicable, of the reason why the employment or position ended.</p> |                     |
| <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction;</p> <p>ensure that each permanent appointment of an employee is subject to the satisfactory completion of a period of probation.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>undertake appropriate continuing professional development;</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 1(a)(b) (4)(a)(b))</p> <p>This specifically relates to making sure that the registered person demonstrates that all staff have completed comprehensive induction, receive regular supervision, have a probationary review of their individual performance and are working towards obtaining a suitable qualification.</p>                                                                                          | <p>1 April 2022</p> |
| <p>The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which—</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>1 April 2022</p> |

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| <p>is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect; and</p> <p>sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect.</p> <p>The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular—</p> <p>provide for liaison and co-operation with any local authority which are, or may be, making a child protection enquiry in relation to a child accommodated in the home;</p> <p>provide for the prompt referral of an allegation about current or ongoing abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the home is located;</p> <p>provide for the prompt referral of an allegation about past abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the alleged abuse or neglect occurred;</p> <p>provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response;</p> <p>describe the measures which may be necessary to protect children following an allegation of abuse or neglect; and</p> <p>describe how and to whom staff are to report, without delay, any concern about abuse or neglect of a child.<br/>(Regulation 34 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f))</p> <p>This specifically relates to making sure that all staff are familiar with the policy on dealing with allegations and know what to do if an allegation is made against, or they have safeguarding concerns about, the leaders and managers of the home.</p> |                     |
| <p>Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home.</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4;</p> <p>ensure that the records are kept up to date; and</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p>1 April 2022</p> |

retain the records for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c))

This specifically relates to the registered person making sure that a children's register and register of staff/other persons working in the home are maintained as per Schedule 4.1 and 4.2.

## Recommendations

- The registered person should, together with the placing and host authorities, ensure that all children access education and have good opportunities to continue to learn. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- The registered person should ensure that agency staff who work on a regular basis in the home receive supervision, support and guidance to enable them to fulfil their professional roles in this particular children's home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.16)

## 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:** 2624784

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Care2Care Children's Home Ltd

**Registered provider address:** Room 147, 981 Great West Road, Brentford,  
London TW8 9DN

**Responsible individual:** Chukwukem Mafe

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Seka Graovac, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
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