

2624855

Registered provider: I.M.P.A.C.T Children's Residential Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

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

Since the last inspection, the registered manager and responsible individual have left the service.

There is no registered manager in post.

There were three children living in the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 8 to 10 November 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **inadequate**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded, and the care and experiences of children are poor.

Date of last inspection: 15 February 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/02/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Since the last inspection, the home has undergone significant management and staffing changes. The registered manager and responsible individual have resigned, 10 staff have left the home, and 12 new staff have been employed.

The director took over the responsible individual's role and appointed a new manager. This manager was dismissed in May 2022. Another manager was appointed and they resigned in September 2022. The home has been without a manager since this time. The part-time operations manager and inexperienced acting deputy manager are in charge of the day-to-day running of the home.

The impact of these changes combined with leaders' and managers' poor oversight of the home have resulted in negative experiences for children living in the home. Leaders and managers have not ensured that staff have the necessary skills and experience to support, safeguard and promote the well-being of children living in the home.

The home is showing some signs of wear and tear. A child's wardrobe shelf is waiting to be reinstalled, there is damage to a child's bedroom wall, and an electric wall socket is broken and unsafe. In addition, the locks in the bathrooms are not suitable because they do not enable staff to have easy access to safeguard children in the event of an emergency.

The children's guide does not help children to understand the home's daily routines, boundaries and expectations when living in the home. The locking of the lounge door at night restricts children's access to all areas of the home. This practice is not assessed or regularly reviewed to ensure that it is necessary.

The children currently living in the home are making some progress. They are re-engaging with their education and attending their health appointments. One child has increased their skills in arts and crafts.

Staff source mentors and coaches for the children to help and encourage them with their interests. Children regularly attend cadets, football and basketball clubs. Children and staff make plans during their house meetings for trips to theme parks, the cinema and go-karting. Children enjoy pampering and gaming nights with staff. Children spoken with said that they liked living in the home.

Staff support children to re-establish and maintain important family relationships. Staff help to facilitate travel and overnight arrangements for children whose families live a long way from the home.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: inadequate

Staff do not have the skills to help and protect children consistently. This was reflected in a recent report that was prepared by the independent person, which stated that staff are not always able to safeguard children and promote their well-being. Neither the responsible individual nor the operations managers were able to explain what actions they had taken in response to the independent person's concerns.

Staff lack the skills to manage children's behaviours or situations that they find challenging. On numerous occasions, staff have called the police to help them manage incidents in the home. The responsible individual said that requests made to the police were due to fear and/or staff's lack of confidence.

Leaders and managers have failed to report all serious incidents involving children living at the home to Ofsted as required.

Strategies to manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other are largely ineffective. Consequently, some children have experienced verbal and physical abuse from each other.

Staff do not understand the risks to children or their roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children. They do not proactively promote children's welfare and safety. On one occasion, due to staff's poor practice, a child, with a history of self-harm, was able to access the home's medication cabinet and subsequently took an overdose of painkillers.

On another occasion, staff did not remove a dangerous item from the home that a child had used as a weapon. As a result, a different child used this item to threaten staff and cause criminal damage in the home.

Staff do not sufficiently monitor children at night. Children have been able to remove knives from the kitchen and access a drill in a locked cupboard. Staff have also failed to secure razors kept in the office. For example, a child managed to get hold of a razor from the office and injured themselves with it.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leadership and management are inconsistent and ineffective. Ofsted has not been provided with information about the provider's assessment of the suitability of the current responsible individual, as requested.

The provider has not appointed and retained a suitable registered manager to lead the home. There is currently no manager in post. The operations manager works two days a week in the home. The acting deputy manager has been in post for two months and has no previous experience of managing a children's home.

None of the staff team have any prior experience of working in children's residential care. Staff training records identify that they lack the necessary experience and skills to meet the needs of the children living at the home. For example, there are significant gaps in staff's training in relation to positive behaviour support, self-harm awareness, and safeguarding children.

The home does not have a sufficient number of permanent staff and relies on agency staff, particularly during the night, to maintain sufficient supervision levels. The high use of agency staff does not provide continuity of care to children.

Leaders and managers fail to monitor the operation of the home effectively. The operations manager said that their systems have been improved. However, shortfalls were found in records, including medication charts, and children's care plans.

The home's whistle-blowing policy is not fit for purpose and the employee handbook is not up to date. The director and responsible individual employs four family members and friends to work in the home. The home's whistle-blowing policy and employee handbook do not set out the procedures necessary to avoid any conflict of interest, should the staff who are family and friends become subject to any allegations.

Following this inspection, Ofsted issued a notice to restrict accommodation to the home and five compliances notices in relation to regulations 12, 13, 27, 34 and 40. A monitoring visit will be undertaken to assess the provider's compliance with these notices.

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; 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; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)(v)(vii)(b))	9 December 2022
* 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.	9 December 2022

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; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to 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)(e)(h))	
*The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	9 December 2022
*The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children’s home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and	9 December 2022

the registered provider— is an organisation or a partnership. (Regulation 27 (1)(a)(i))	
*The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which— is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect; and sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular— describe how and to whom staff are to report, without delay, any concern about abuse or neglect of a child. (Regulation 34 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f))	9 December 2022
An individual may only carry on a children's home if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (5). An individual may only carry on a home with another individual or other individuals, otherwise than in a partnership, if that individual and each other individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (5). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2; the individual is mentally and physically fit to carry on the home; and the individual is financially fit to carry on the home. The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of the matters in paragraphs 1 and 3 to 6 of Schedule 2.	31 December 2022

A responsible individual must— satisfy the requirements in paragraph (5)(a) to (c); and 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 (1) (5)(a)(b)(c)(d) (6)(a)(b) (7)(a)(b)) In particular, the provider’s company secretary or other company directors must provide Ofsted with a report demonstrating that they have fulfilled their statutory obligations to ensure that the nominated person is fit to be the responsible individual.	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children’s home; if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a) (3)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff receive training to meet the needs of all of the children living in the home.	31 December 2022

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home produces a children’s guide that helps children to understand the day-to-day routines of the home and the care that they can expect to receive while they are living there. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 24, paragraph 4.22)
- The registered person should assess and keep under review the practice of locking the lounge door at night. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.10)

- The registered person should improve or replace some of the home's fixtures and fittings. This includes bathroom locks, a child's wardrobe shelf, and the conservatory plug socket. They should also ensure that the damage to a bedroom wall is repaired. ('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: 2624855

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: I.M.P.A.C.T Children's Residential Care Ltd

Responsible individual: Rachel Gray

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Victoria Jones, Social Care Inspector

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