

2625371

Registered provider: R G Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately run home. The statement of purpose states that the home provides care for up to five children who have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder and/or learning difficulties.

The home is situated next to an adult provision and an activity centre owned by the same company.

The home re-registered under new ownership on 1 March 2021. The current owners are the third owners of the home in the last three years. The manager was previously registered under the home's former ownership in November 2020 and has been in post since May 2020.

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

This inspection was conducted on site and involved meetings with children and staff. Feedback was given by email from social workers, a parent, and a personal advisor. A staff questionnaire was also shared for those staff who were not on site but wished to contribute their views.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 August 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: 20 April 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/04/2021	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

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

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

The quality of children's care is limited by an unsettled staff team due to the high staff turnover and inconsistent training. Despite the concerns, the two children living in the home make progress and are supported by a genuine sense of emotional warmth in their home.

Children now enjoy a broader range of activities. This is partly due to the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions and also to the increased initiative of the staff team. Staff regularly access local parks, ferry ports and museums, to engage and stimulate children. More structured routines are supported by the improved use of visual aids such as a weekly pictorial timetable.

Children have access to a swimming pool which lies adjacent to the home. However, their access to this is limited as none of the staff team are trained lifeguards. Children can only access this provision when staff from the organisation's adult provision are able to provide lifeguard support.

The improvements in the home are valued by both a parent and a placing social worker. A parent commented, 'Things have really improved; the new staff are really on point,' and a social worker commented, 'I cannot fault the love and affection shown by the staff team.'

Since the last inspection, educational progress has improved for both children living in the home. They both have planned college placements due to commence in September 2021. Staff work hard to incorporate education into daily routines and outings, this includes worksheets linked to activities such as woodland walks. Leaders and managers now expect that all children who move into the home have a plan in place for education, this avoids drift and delay.

The home environment requires improvement. The wooden garden decking is tatty and requires renovation. In addition, the new homeowners have placed a large sign outside the home which advertises their ownership. This presents an overly institutionalised impression and may lead to parents and children feeling unsettled on visiting the home.

Behaviour management has improved since the last full inspection. Written records demonstrate that staff work consistently to intervene quickly when children are struggling. Effective strategies, such as allowing children to make use of the nearby activity centre, work well. This has resulted in a reduction in assaults on staff and a calmer feel to the home.

Support provided to children, to help them to learn independent living skills, has improved since the last full inspection. Staff understand and value the importance of

children developing their independence skills. Children are gently cajoled to try new and challenging experiences, such as writing a shopping list and paying for items at the shops. This progress helps children to increase their social interaction skills and levels of self-esteem.

Children experience positive, managed time with family and friends. This helps them to sustain important relationships and develop a sense of their own identity.

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

Not all staff are trained in the use of restraint. This shortfall was a contributing factor when a new staff member was injured during the restraint of a child. The new member of staff was working with an agency member of staff and neither of them were trained in the use of restraint. The lack of restraint training for staff places children and staff at risk of harm.

Leaders and managers have commissioned specialist training to help staff to manage one child's complex health condition. However, this training remains outstanding. This limits the understanding and awareness of staff about the possible side effects and developmental prognosis for the child concerned. In addition, staff have not yet completed important training on female genital mutilation.

Leaders and managers accept that staff turnover and use of agency staff remain too high. Despite the successful introduction of three new staff members, leaders and managers continue to be heavily reliant on the use of agency staff. This is the third inspection where this has been raised as a concern and continues to present inconsistency for children.

The quality of case recordings and key documentation has improved since the last full inspection. Care plans and risk assessments are updated more regularly. These documents offer clear and achievable targets, such as remaining polite to adults. This allows for the progress of children to be monitored and evaluated more effectively.

Staff are proactive and advocate for children with placing authorities. For example, staff supported one child to obtain their national insurance number and to apply for benefits to avoid undue delay. This helped care planning and supported the child to move to a more independent setting.

Multi-agency working is effective and ensures that children receive the intervention required to meet their needs. Leaders and managers liaised with a placing authority to secure the legal authorisation for restrictions on a child's liberty on reaching his eighteenth birthday. This ensured the stability of the placement and adherence to legislation.

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

Leaders and managers have identified a new responsible individual for the home. The proposed responsible individual is experienced in children's residential care and has a positive working relationship with the registered manager. This is integral to the improvement and development of the home.

The responsible individual has supported the registered manager to reduce the amount of time that she spends involved in the direct care of children. Therefore, the registered manager now focuses on the management and oversight of the home and the care provided to children.

Leaders and managers feel that the home is on a 'journey of progress'. They are committed to developing a consistent and stable staff team to avoid the regular use of agency staff. They have implemented a realistic and achievable development plan.

Staff recruitment does not meet safer recruitment practice guidance. Leaders and managers do not formally record the verbal verification of references for prospective staff. This limits a full assessment of their suitability.

Some action has been taken to address the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection. This has resulted in improvement in management monitoring and oversight, case recordings, children's access to education and the frequency of staff supervision. Improved systems have been implemented including an electronic recording and monitoring system. However, further work is required to ensure that all the requirements set at the last inspection are met.

There is no workforce development plan in place for the home. This limits management oversight and evaluation of staff training and development needs. However, a tutor has been identified to support managers and staff to achieve the required national qualification for children's residential care. This demonstrates that the provider is taking action to develop the staff team.

The improved frequency and quality of supervision are central to the improvement in staff morale. Staff sense that things are 'coming together' and feel more valued and appreciated by managers. Despite this, staff have not yet received a performance appraisal. This limits a full assessment of the individual progress of staff.

Some children's case records do not include important documents. For example, they do not include some children's local authority care plans. This limits the providers ability to plan care for children effectively.

The procedure for admitting new children to the home is child centred. Managers ensure that new admissions are conducted at the child's pace and include regular review and assessment of the child's needs. This reduces the impact on children moving into the home and those already resident in 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
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)) In particular, they must ensure that all staff receive training regarding the use of restraint, becoming a pool lifeguard and female genital mutilation This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	1 October 2021
The registered person must ensure that all employees— have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(c)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	1 October 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; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;	1 October 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; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)) In particular, the provider must limit the use of agency staff to provide consistency and stability for children. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
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; or 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, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and 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)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that they verify and record details of the verification for all references for new staff.	1 October 2021

This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that there is a workforce development plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should be updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home. In particular, the training matrix must be kept up to date. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should ensure that performance appraisals consider the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and the views of the young people in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)
- The registered person should ensure that the decking in the garden area is improved and the exterior signs which relate to the ownership of the home are removed. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards' page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that any placing authority is challenged to provide a complete and current relevant plan. In particular, the home is to ensure that case files contain up-to-date care plans from the placing authority. This will inform care planning for the children concerned. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.5).

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: 2625371

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: R G Care Ltd

Registered provider address: Second Floor, 123 Aldersgate Street, London EC1A 4JQ

Responsible individual: Adrienne Bloom

Registered manager: Danielle Ansell

Inspector

Barnaby Dowell, Social Care Inspector

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