

2625941

Registered provider: Active Young People Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private company. It is registered to provide full-time care for up to nine children with learning disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2023. She holds suitable qualifications for this role.

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 June 2023

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: 25 May 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/05/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
22/02/2022	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

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

The internal presentation of the home has deteriorated since the last inspection. Redecoration is required in a number of areas and some children's bathrooms are in a particularly poor condition. This does not help children to feel cared for or important.

One child's snacks are locked away in his kitchen to prevent overeating. This means the child frequently sees staff with keys unlocking the cupboard door when he wants a snack. This arrangement has not been properly risk-assessed, nor is it reviewed. This is not a positive learning experience for the child.

Prior to children moving in, the manager takes care to ensure that their needs can be met at this home. Transitions are well planned, and the manager involves all of those people who are important to the child in the process. While the manager fully considers the competing needs and risks of all children, this is not reflected in the child's assessment document. As a result, there is a lack of guidance for staff to help them mitigate the competing risks of children.

A professional has placed restrictions on which staff can care for one child. It is unclear whether those restrictions are in the best interests of the child. This has gone unchallenged by the manager. As a result, the child's voice is not being heard.

Staff are creative in supporting children to attend routine health appointments. However, one child's physical and dental health has declined. Health professionals have identified that the number of sugary drinks the child consumes within the home has contributed to this. In addition, there is a lack of understanding or challenge from staff as to what the child eats when in the care of others.

Children have individualised targets to develop their independence skills. However, there are no timescales for their completion or review, which causes drift. This prevents adjustments being made for those children who need additional support.

Staff encourage and facilitate children to move on to the next stage of their education. Children are taken to a variety of education provisions, which provides them with a choice. This helps children to make decisions that are right for them.

Children's wishes are listened to and acted on by staff. This helps children to feel valued. They are taken to clubs and special events that are important to them, where they have fun and make long-lasting memories. This also increases children's confidence and develops their social skills. One child told inspectors how much this benefits his mental health.

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

Children's risk assessments are comprehensive and contain information that helps staff to understand the children's risks. However, the assessments are not always accurate. This could result in inconsistent care being given to children.

There has been a failure to challenge professionals in relation to their response to one child's risk-taking behaviour. This could expose the child to further risk of harm.

One-to-one sessions take place with children infrequently. There is also a lack of targeted work on known risk issues or when children are experiencing significant change. This means that children are not always supported with those aspects of their lives that are most important.

Missing-from-home protocols are unclear. As a result, staff do not fully understand what to do when a child goes missing from home. In addition, essential information is missing from important documents such as the Philomena Protocol. This could delay children from being found, thereby increasing their risk of harm.

The home's safeguarding procedures are not always followed when staff take children out of the home. This failure contributed to a lengthy missing-from-home episode for a particularly vulnerable child. Insufficient action has been taken to prevent a repeat. The number of phones available to staff remains inadequate. Furthermore, staff told inspectors that these phones are often out of charge.

The recording of physical interventions is overly complex. They are recorded in two different ways, depending on the nature of the intervention. This impacts on the manager's ability to identify and respond to any patterns or trends.

One child has not taken part in a fire drill. This lack of awareness about what to do in the event of a fire could place this child and the other children at greater risk of harm.

Measures are in place to recruit new staff safely. However, on one occasion, a gap in employment was not sufficiently explored. This does not follow safer recruitment guidelines.

Allegations are taken seriously and dealt with swiftly. Information is carefully considered, and the appropriate agencies are informed. Decisions are taken that protect the children.

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

For a number of the staff team, English is not their first language. Despite this, the manager has not assured herself that they fully understand the children's risk

assessments and care plans. In addition, not all staff understand the whistle-blowing policy. This means that they do not know what to do in the event of concerning behaviour should it be brought to their attention. As a result, children are more vulnerable to harm.

Staff training records are not up to date. This makes it difficult for the manager to identify which staff require training. Some staff are overdue their refresher training in physical restraint. This could increase the risk of harm to the children in the event that such an intervention is required.

Some improvements have been made to staff supervision. There is now a fuller agenda and safeguarding matters are discussed. However, reflective practice is still not undertaken. This prevents staff from learning and managers from identifying and addressing shortfalls in staff practice. When staff express feelings of stress within supervision, there is often a lack of action taken. This leaves staff unsupported and could impact on the quality of care they provide to the children.

Debriefs take place with staff after serious incidents. Staff value this process because it provides them with an opportunity to discuss what took place and identify what could have been done differently. It is positive that staff describe being able to be 'honest' within these discussions. Team meetings are called when particularly serious incidents take place. This helps children to receive safer care.

The manager has worked tirelessly to ensure that there are no staff vacancies within the home. As a result, use of agency staff has considerably reduced. This helps to ensure that children receive care from staff who are familiar to them and who understand them.

The manager's focus on addressing some of the issues has reduced her capacity to fulfil other aspects of her role. She has not had oversight of important documents, such as children's risk assessments. Some incidents have lacked management scrutiny. This limits the opportunity for the manager to assure herself that practice is safe and effective and the children's needs are met.

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (c))	10 August 2023
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii))	10 August 2023
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles.	10 August 2023

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child’s relevant plans; understand the child’s health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child’s health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child’s age and understanding; take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child’s health and well-being needs; and understand and develop skills to promote the child’s well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))	
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— have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; 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)(iii)(v)(b))	10 August 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.	10 August 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))	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— manage and review the placement of each child in the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(b)(ii))	10 August 2023
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))	10 August 2023
The registered person must ensure that all employees—	10 August 2023

receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(b))	10 August 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that any decisions to limit a child's access to any area of the home are only made where this is intended to safeguard the child's welfare. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child's needs, be properly recorded, and be kept under regular review. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- The registered person should ensure that records of physical intervention are kept in one place to enable the manager to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)
- The registered person should ensure that training undertaken by staff is clearly recorded and that refresher training is undertaken within timescale. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53 paragraph 10.8)

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: 2625941

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Active Young People Limited

Registered provider address: 1 Suffolk Way, Sevenoaks TN13 1YL

Responsible individual: Gemma Wilkinson

Registered manager: Stevie Daley

Inspectors

Emma Ridley, Social Care Inspector

Lee Riley, Social Care Inspector

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