

2641767

Registered provider: Real Care Support Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private provider. The home is registered to provide care for up to five children. At the time of the inspection, there were three children living in the home.

The registered manager's post is vacant. There is a manager in place who is going to apply to register with Ofsted.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 February 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/or widespread failures that mean that children are not protected, or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded, and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor, and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
Not previously inspected		

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

The experiences and progress of children living in the home are inadequate. Staff do not have access to children's relevant plans and do not understand children's individual needs. Therefore, children are not receiving well-planned care that promotes their safety and well-being.

Children are not progressing in education. Staff encourage children to engage in online education, but this is not sufficient to meet their education needs. One child had been to visit a prospective new school. However, the manager could not evidence that this school had been assessed or deemed appropriate to meet the child's needs. The child's education, health and care plan had not been used to inform this process and the manager was not aware of the contents of this plan.

Ineffective decision-making around children moving into the home has left children at risk of harm. Impact risk assessments do not contain all of the relevant information about children. These assessments do not carefully consider the risk factors for each child and their compatibility with other children already living in the home.

Relationships between children have been challenging. Staff actions in response to incidents between children are ineffective. Staff are not supporting children to develop the skills and strategies to manage conflicts or develop positive relationships. Furthermore, on two occasions, children have been sent on extended holidays as a response to incidents that have occurred in the home. This action is not appropriate and does not support children to develop an appropriate sense of permanence and belonging.

When children raise concerns, they are offered a complaints form. If children do not want to fill in a complaints form, then staff do not respond to the matter raised. This does not demonstrate that children are being listened to or that staff are placing children's well-being at the centre of their practice.

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

There are serious and widespread failings in the assessment and management of risk. Leaders, the manager and staff do not respond appropriately to safeguarding incidents that occur or ensure that there are effective strategies in place to safeguard the children living in the home. Therefore, the children living in the home have been placed at risk of significant harm.

The manager and staff do not fully understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe. Staff do not know or understand what the children's current

risks are; therefore, they are unable to safeguard children. For example, despite information from the police about the potential risks that children may pose to each other in regard to exploitation, no action had been taken to consider or act on this information. This left children at risk of harm.

Risk assessments do not provide clear or effective strategies for the staff to follow. As a result, the manager and staff are failing to appropriately respond to and reduce the risks presented to the children. This includes the risk of bullying and exploitation.

There have been numerous incidents of bullying between the children living in the home. Managers and staff lack an understanding of, or insight into, the effect of continued bullying on children's emotional well-being. One child told staff that they were scared another child was going to hurt them. Despite this, the manager and staff have not taken swift and effective action to protect children from continued harm.

Children do not benefit from clear and consistent boundaries or effective behaviour-management strategies. When children have been restrained, documentation is not consistently completed. Furthermore, when a child reported that they had been harmed during interventions, this was not responded to appropriately.

The manager has not evaluated the appropriateness or effectiveness of the measures used to manage children's behaviour. Consequently, staff continue to use ineffective behaviour-management strategies, and children are not learning to reflect on and improve their behaviour.

Safer recruitment processes have not been followed. Managers have failed to complete necessary checks to ensure that staff working in the home are suitable to work with children. Staff are working in the home without sufficient references being obtained or any photographic identification being verified. This does not keep children safe.

The manager has failed to respond to concerns about the safety of the home environment. This means that children are at risk from avoidable hazards. Furthermore, standards of cleanliness in the home are poor and some areas of the home have been affected by damage that has not been repaired.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There has not been a registered manager at the home since September 2021. The acting manager has not demonstrated that they have the knowledge, skills or experience to lead the home and ensure that the children are safeguarded.

Management oversight of children's risk assessments and incidents has failed to identify shortfalls in safeguarding practice. Therefore, ineffective safeguarding practice has continued, which has placed children at risk of harm.

Not all staff have received regular supervision, which means that opportunities for the manager to develop staff practice have been missed. Furthermore, not all staff have received training that is relevant to the needs of the children living in the home. Therefore, staff are not able to meet the needs of children or keep them safe.

The manager has not identified any learning from complaints and feedback received. This means that they have failed to implement changes to improve the experiences and care of children. For example, although the independent person raised concerns about the admission of one child to the home, the manager did not take action to improve this process.

Staff rotas do not demonstrate the hours that the manager has worked in the home. When there have been gaps in rotas, the manager has used staff from other services operated by the provider. This fails to demonstrate that staffing arrangements have provided continuity of care for children. Furthermore, the manager has not supervised the additional staff members or determined whether they have the necessary skills and qualifications to work with children.

The manager has failed to ensure that there are accurate and up-to-date records for children who live in the home. This includes records produced by the home but also the local authority plans for the care of the children. This has affected the quality of care and support for children living in the home.

The manager has failed to notify Ofsted of all significant events. This does not support effective monitoring of safeguarding concerns.

Due to the serious safeguarding concerns, Ofsted has taken immediate action and suspended the registration of the home. Consequently, there are now no children living 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 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— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; protect and promote each child's welfare; treat each child with dignity and respect; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect; make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(ix))	16 March 2022
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— develop positive relationships with them;	16 March 2022

engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children’s care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— ascertain and consider each child’s views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child’s best interests when making decisions about the child’s care and welfare; help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; help each child to understand how the child’s views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child; regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home’s care; help each child to understand how the child’s privacy will be respected and the circumstances when it may have to be limited; ensure that each child— is enabled to provide feedback to, and raise issues with, a relevant person about the support and services that the child receives. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(b)(i))	
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child’s education and training targets, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans;	16 March 2022

understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child's education or training provider and the child's placing authority; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible; help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)(v)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x))	
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. 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	16 March 2022

well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding; understand and develop skills to promote the child's well-being. Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iv))	
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; strive to gain each child's respect and trust; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to	16 March 2022

the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children; understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them; and that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. Regulation 11 (a)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(viii)(ix)(x)(xi)(xii)(xiii)(b))	
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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; 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; 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;	16 March 2022

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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(d))	
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 have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and 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)(e)(f)(g)(ii)(h))	16 March 2022
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.	16 March 2022

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose; that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority; that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(c))	
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. The registered person must provide a copy of the statement of purpose to HMCI and make a copy of it available upon request to— a person who works at the home; a child, or a child for whom accommodation in the home is being considered; a parent of a child, or a parent of a child for whom accommodation in the home is being considered; a child's placing authority. The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision.	16 March 2022

Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. Regulation 16 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) (3)(a)(b) (5))	
Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing— injury to any person (including the child); serious damage to the property of any person (including the child); or a child who is accommodated in a secure children's home from absconding from the home. Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2))	16 March 2022
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— provide adequate means of escape from the home in the event of fire; make arrangements for persons working at the home to receive suitable training in fire prevention. (Regulation 25 (1)(b)(c))	16 March 2022
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—	16 March 2022

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; 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)(d))	
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. The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and	16 March 2022

a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (2) (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)((b)(i)(ii)(c))	
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 are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))	16 March 2022
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; there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(e))	16 March 2022

Recommendation

- The registered person is responsible for ensuring that each child's day to day health and well-being needs are met. Staff should work to make the children's home an environment that supports children's physical, mental and emotional health, in line with the approach set out in the home's Statement of Purpose. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.3)

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: 2641767

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Real Care Support Ltd.

Registered provider address: 1st Floor, West Wing, Derby House, Lytham Road, Fulwood, Preston, Lancashire PR2 8JE

Responsible individual: Peter Barron

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Emma Thornton, Social Care Inspector

Julia Toller, Social Care Regulatory Inspection Manager

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