

2642537

Registered provider: Creating Care Choices Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately run and provides care for up to six children with learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities.

The home registered with Ofsted in October 2021. The manager registered on 22 September 2022.

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

During the visit, the inspectors were aware that a serious incident was under investigation by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, the inspectors considered the actions the home has taken in response to the incident, alongside other relevant evidence available to them.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 August 2023

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 children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: 16 May 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

The home was judged inadequate at the last full inspection, on 16 and 17 May 2023. Following the inspection, Ofsted issued two compliance notices. A monitoring visit was undertaken on 27 June 2023 when the compliance notices were met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/05/2023	Full	Inadequate
25/10/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

There continue to be serious shortfalls in care planning, management oversight of the home and the safeguarding of children. Consequently, children's experiences have been limited, and their safety has been compromised. This has led to a further inadequate judgment.

Leaders and managers have failed to fully report children's challenges and needs to placing authorities. One social worker reported they were only informed of four incidents out of 21 for one child living at the home. This resulted in the placing authority having an inaccurate understanding of the child's progress and needs. Appropriate additional support was therefore not provided, to the detriment of the child's emotional and behavioural needs.

Staff do not support all children to follow structured routines effectively. Although one child appears to have had a good routine of attending educational activities during the school summer holiday, the other child spends a lot of time in the home and walking in the garden.

Staff support children to spend time with their family members. However, children's experiences during time spent with family are not always in their best interests, and appropriate action is not taken timely to address this.

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

Children are not safeguarded effectively and leaders, managers and staff do not always take appropriate action to keep children safe and ensure that their needs are met.

Action was not taken promptly in response to safeguarding concerns identified for one child during their family time spent at the home. This had a detrimental impact on the child's health and well-being. Leaders, managers and staff did not address the safeguarding concerns or challenge the family member involved, resulting in the child continuing to be at risk of significant harm. Furthermore, during the inspection, the registered manager did not demonstrate a good understanding of the safeguarding concern and seriousness of the situation.

Robust safer recruitment procedures are not in place. References were not obtained for the newly appointed responsible individual before he started work at the home. They were requested on the day of this inspection when this was raised by the inspector. Furthermore, staff were introduced to a new person who will be responsible for quality assurance in the organisation. However, no recruitment process has taken place for this person.

Appropriate steps are not taken to manage and reduce risks to children's physical safety in the home. The recommendations in relation to fire safety identified in the fire risk assessment have not been addressed, despite this being identified as a shortfall at the last full inspection and the monitoring visit.

Although staff have completed training to safely restrain children, they do not demonstrate consistently good understanding of what constitutes restraint. Some staff's response to their lack of understanding was that they 'do not use restraint'.

Children's behaviour support plans only include some general information about restraint and do not consider children's individual needs, including their communication needs or disability. This demonstrates that staff do not have the information, skills, knowledge and experience to restrain children safely.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The leadership and management of the home are ineffective. Leaders and managers do not demonstrate a good understanding of the seriousness of the shortfalls identified by Ofsted and concerns expressed by external professionals, including placing authorities.

The provider has not taken sufficient action to address the shortfalls identified at the previous inspection, when the home was judged to be inadequate. A number of requirements and recommendations previously raised have not been met and are restated. This demonstrates that leaders and managers do not use monitoring and review systems effectively to make improvements to the quality of care provided to children.

There are concerns about leaders' and managers' transparency and information-sharing with placing authorities. They have significantly under-reported incidents for one child to the placing authority. The social worker said that when challenged about this, the registered manager insisted that he had shared this information in the child's looked after review. However, the recollection of professionals involved, and the minutes of the meeting, do not support this.

The independent person who undertakes monthly visits to the home to consider how well children are safeguarded and how children's well-being is promoted has failed to identify many of the shortfalls found by Ofsted. Leaders and managers have not challenged this, and the independent person continues to carry out the monthly visits. This demonstrates that the ineffective external monitoring of the service continues.

Team meetings are held regularly and provide messages to staff about Ofsted's findings and compliance and the expectations that staff should address the shortfalls. However, team meetings fail to consider other important issues, including the experiences and progress of the children, activities, children's likes and dislikes, what has worked well and what the challenges are. As a result, the ability to improve the quality of care provided to children is limited and is compromised.

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, The 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 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 has sufficient staff to provide care for 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— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and 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)(d)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h))	22 November 2023

In particular, leaders and managers must have sufficient oversight of records, practices and incidents in the home to continually develop the quality of care in the home. Leaders and managers must follow important recommendations from risk assessments. Leaders and managers must ensure that there are enough staff available so all children can engage in structured activities in the home and out in the community. This requirement was raised at the previous inspection and is restated.	
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; 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; 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; that the effectiveness of the home’s child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(e)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that incident records are accurate and that information relating to incidents is shared with relevant people. Leaders and managers must ensure that staff act immediately to reduce the risk of harm to children.	6 October 2023

This requirement was raised at the previous 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 The requirements are that— 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)) This requirement was raised at the previous inspection and is restated.	6 October 2023
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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child's relevant plans are followed; that the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plans is requested, if— the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child's needs. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(e)(j)) In particular, leaders and managers must adhere to the staffing levels for children as agreed with the placing authority. Leaders and managers must ensure that the placing authority is informed immediately of any concerns about children.	6 October 2023

In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child’s placing authority effectively in the child’s care, in accordance with the child’s relevant plans; seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child’s needs; 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; and seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children’s home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c)(d)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that the placing authority is informed of any relevant information about children’s behaviour so appropriate support can be provided.	6 October 2023
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 33 (4)(a))	22 November 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home’s policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. This appraisal should take into account, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and of children in the home’s care. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 61, paragraph 13.5)

- The registered person should ensure that an independent person makes a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

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: 2642537

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Creating Care Choices Limited

Registered provider address: 38 Castle Drive, Ilford, Essex IG4 5AE

Responsible individual: Nasae Evanson

Registered manager: Kolawole Ajayi

Inspectors

Aneta Wasilewska, Social Care Inspector
Naintara Khosla, His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023