

2650054

Registered provider: Courtyard Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home was run for several years by a small provider but has recently re-registered after being bought by a large national provider. This is the home's first inspection since re-registering. The home provides care for up to six children with learning disabilities.

The manager is registered with Ofsted and is currently undertaking a management qualification.

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: 16 to 17 November 2021

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

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

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

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
Not previously inspected		

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Overall, children receive good care from the staff employed at the home, who know and understand the children well. Staff speak fondly of the children and are proud of the things that they achieve. Staff are responsive to the children's needs and communicate well with them, using a variety of communication methods and aids.

Children are not always cared for by a consistent staff team as there are insufficient staff permanently employed. The reliance on agency staff impairs the consistency of care provided to children. There is a risk to the children's sense of security and stability as temporary staff do not have the same level of understanding of the children's needs and their non-verbal cues. This puts additional pressure on permanent staff and has an impact on other work being carried out in the home, such as completing monthly reports.

Some children have made progress in the home in areas such as communication, personal care and in developing their independence. Parents and professionals speak very highly of the home, the care children receive and the progress they have made from their starting points.

Children have bedrooms that are personalised to their individual interests and preferences. Some of the communal areas provide sensory experiences and there are ample toys and games for children to be creative with. Children have access to a range of activities in both the home and the community. Staff are creative in providing sensory play activities and activities specifically tailored to the individual child. The children attend a local youth club, where they participate in a wide range of activities.

Children's health needs are well met and the staff work with a range of external professionals in identifying areas where additional support and resources could further improve children's experiences and outcomes. Most of the children attend local specialist education provision and are settled within school.

The quality and content of children's plans are variable. Risk assessments and support plans are generic and not individualised to the children. Not all relevant plans have been provided to the home and some of the children's plans are significantly out of date. This prevents staff at the home from having current information about the children that should inform the home's own plans and care.

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

Children's risk assessments are generic and not personalised to the individual child. Not all known risks are identified or recorded. Some information has been cut and pasted from other children's documents. For example, support strategies are

identical for each child and do not reflect differing individual complex needs. This prevents staff from being able to identify risk factors that are specific to each child they are working with and using tailored strategies to support them.

A shortfall was identified around the use of one prescribed medication to support a child when they are distressed or anxious. The home did not have a risk assessment or protocol in place for the administration of this medication. There is a lack of appropriate recording, for example for the use of this medication in response to a child's emotional needs. There is no management oversight. This does not support staff to understand when this medication should be administered and in what circumstances. This also prevents effective monitoring and tracking of the child's health needs.

In order to meet staffing ratios, there is an over-reliance on agency staff. On some occasions, there are more agency staff than permanent staff working on shift. This prevents children from building trusting and positive relationships with staff in the home and consistency of care is compromised.

The management oversight of recruitment, particularly for temporary agency staff, is poor. The necessary checks to ensure that safe adults have been employed to work at the home are not recorded. The manager does not have access to staff files until these have been completed, and forwarded by the human resources team. This means that staff have been working in the home without management oversight of their safe recruitment.

There are very few incidents or safeguarding concerns. The staff have received training to equip them to safely manage behaviour, and in how to report any concerns around a child's welfare.

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

The registered manager's capacity to have good management oversight, to quality assure work and monitor the care provided is impeded due to a lack of experienced permanent staff. The manager has been required to work on shift to provide direct support. In doing this, the manager is prevented from carrying out management tasks. Despite the known staffing situation, the manager has continued to admit more children to the home. This has impacted on the overall quality of care being delivered, as it further stretches core staff. The manager does know the children very well and acts as a very positive role model of child-centred practice.

Management oversight and monitoring of key documents are insufficient. Children's plans contain old and out-of-date information and plans are not regularly reviewed or updated. They are not consistently personalised or made individual to the child.

Staff receive regular supervision and appraisal. All staff have completed mandatory training, as well as additional training relevant to the needs of the children in the

home. Most staff have the necessary qualification for working with children in residential care.

Communication and relationships with external professionals and parents are a strength in the home and the manager works well in a multidisciplinary team. Additional support for children is accessed through external professional networks when needed.

Staff carry around large bunches of keys as most of the doors in the home are locked or only accessible via keypads. Some children's rooms have locked wardrobes, bathrooms and drawers and this detracts from a homely feel. Communal spaces are warm and welcoming and contain a range of toys and activities for the children.

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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)) In particular, this relates to significant use of large numbers of agency staff and over-reliance on temporary staff to cover shortfalls in the rota.	3 January 2022
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 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)(b)) In particular, this relates to children having individualised risk assessments and protocols relevant to their individual care needs.	3 January 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.	3 January 2022

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— 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)(c)(d)(e)(h)) In particular, this relates to the reliance on large numbers of agency workers to address staffing shortfalls and the impact on management oversight of the home.	
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— 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)) In particular, this relates to safe recruitment checks for agency staff and the manager having access to staff personnel files.	3 January 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that any external agency staff meet the requirements in regulation 32(4) and should consider their skills, qualifications

and any induction necessary before they work at the home. The use of agency staff should be closely monitored and reviewed to ensure that children receive continuity of care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.16)

- The registered person should ensure that no more than half the staff on duty at any one time are from an external agency. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.17)

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: 2650054

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Courtyard Care Limited

Registered provider address: Siskin Drive, Middlemarch Business Park, Coventry
CV3 4FJ

Responsible individual: Gary Thompson

Registered manager: Leanne Mills

Inspector

Sarah Orriss, Social Care Inspector

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