

2650054

Registered provider: Courtyard Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a large private provider. It is registered to provide care for up to six children with learning disabilities. The statement of purpose says the aim of the home is to provide a safe, warm and nurturing environment.

The home has had three managers this year. The most recently appointed manager has not applied to register with Ofsted and will be leaving in December 2022.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 November 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected and their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: 16 November 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/11/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Although children have made some progress, their experiences have been impacted on by poor safeguarding practice and weak leadership and management.

There are positive relationships between staff and children. Staff know the children well. They support children to communicate, recognising each child's preferred method of communication. However, some incidents at the home raise concerns about staff practice. The situation is exacerbated due to poor management responses, a failure to properly investigate incidents or share concerns with safeguarding agencies and stakeholders. This poor safeguarding practice impacts on the quality of care being provided.

Children's care plans and behaviour support plans are individual to each child and they are detailed. They provide staff with clear information on how best to support children and provide structured routines. However, not all staff have read these plans, which risks inconsistency in how children are cared for. Occasionally, some aspects of the children's plans are not consistent with good-quality care, for example in how resources are managed in providing personal care. Some practical measures employed by staff to manage resources could have a negative impact on the children's health and well-being.

The manager works with a range of external agencies in supporting children's healthcare needs. Children are supported with menu choices and are encouraged to eat a healthy, varied diet. Children engage in activities and have an active lifestyle. Children are registered with all relevant health professionals.

All of the children have an education provision that is suitable in meeting their needs and they have good attendance. Children have opportunities to engage in activities in the community, including swimming and attending a youth club. Children are supported to stay in touch with people who are important to them and maintain these relationships. Staff have been creative in helping children to stay in touch with their families. Parents spoken with were positive about the home.

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

On one occasion, staff used an inappropriate restraint to manage a child's behaviour. This led to the child having visible injuries/marks on their body. The manager failed to challenge staff practice or report this incident and the injuries to the child's social worker, the local authority designated officer, or Ofsted as regulator. This was an example of poor behaviour management practice, and a lack of appropriate response by leaders and managers. The failure to identify and challenge this practice places children at risk of harm.

An agency member of staff ignored staff direction when using the inappropriate restraint. However, other staff did not intervene to prevent the incident taking place. The agency has not been informed of this staff member's conduct, which potentially places other children at risk of harm and allows poor practice to go unchallenged.

On another occasion, a child was subject to an inappropriate restraint while away on holiday. Although a member of staff later reported their concerns, staff at the time did not intervene to prevent the incident or raise their concerns with managers. Staff did not document the incident properly. Managers took appropriate action in relation to the restraint practice once they were made aware of the incident. However, the management response failed to address why staff did not intervene to stop the incident or raise their concerns to managers straight away. Staff are not using whistle-blowing procedures, nor taking appropriate action to keep children safe.

On one occasion, a school reported to a social worker that a child had a bruise. Although the social worker was satisfied with the explanation given after seeing the child, the manager failed to share significant and relevant contextual information regarding staff practice prior to this bruise being noticed. This prevented the social worker from making an assessment of the child's needs and welfare based on all relevant information.

There is a lack of clear, consistent recording of incidents, and a lack of robust management oversight. Incidents are not routinely shared with social workers. Daily, weekly, and monthly reports do not always record when incidents have occurred. This prevents external professionals from knowing about incidents and, as a consequence, impairs external scrutiny of the care provided.

Staff and children do not always have debriefs following incidents. This means that children do not always have the opportunity to tell adults what has happened and communicate how they may be feeling. There is also a lack of opportunity for staff to reflect on their practice and learn from incidents, particularly to reflect on better, more appropriate ways to respond to children and manage incidents.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There has been a failure of leadership and management in the home. There is no registered manager. Despite this, senior managers have not provided sufficient support and oversight of the home. There has been a reliance on self-reporting from the acting manager and reliance on the independent visitor reports. There has not been a process in place for senior managers to properly understand what is happening in the home, and examine the information provided. The home has had three managers so far this year. This has led to instability and inconsistent practice.

There are significant shortfalls in sharing information with external professionals and the regulator, and this has allowed for some poor staff practice to go unchallenged. The manager has failed to inform social workers and other professionals, including the regulator, of incidents in the home. This has prevented all agencies from having

informed oversight of care and safeguarding practices, and has placed children at risk of harm.

When staff have raised their concerns about practice, there has not been a robust response from managers. The manager has failed to address staff conduct, in particular regarding restraint practice.

Staff do not receive regular or meaningful supervision. Consequently, staff lack opportunities for reflective discussion to develop their practice. Staff have not followed internal whistle-blowing policies.

Staff have opportunities to access a wide range of training and most staff have completed this training. Managers were unable to confirm during the inspection that all staff had completed safeguarding training. However, this was actually a shortfall in the way that staff training is recorded in the home.

The external independent visitor has not been visiting the home on a monthly basis, and reporting has not led to earlier identification of poor staff practice.

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— ensure that staff- protect and promote each child's welfare; treat each child with dignity and respect. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(ii)(iii)) In particular, this relates to ensuring that a child is provided with sufficient resources to meet their care needs, and that care is arranged to ensure these needs are met.	1 January 2023
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;	1 January 2023

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)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(e)) In particular, this relates to the management of safeguarding concerns, concerns around staff practice and sharing information with external agencies.	
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; 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; 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)(b)(f)(h)) In particular, this relates to improving management monitoring and oversight of the home. It also relates to staff working together in addressing concerns around practice.	1 January 2023

The registered person must operate a disciplinary procedure which, in particular— provides that the failure on the part of an employee to report an incident of abuse, or suspected abuse, whether past or present, in relation to a child to the appropriate person is a ground on which disciplinary proceedings may be instituted. The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (2)(b) (4)(b)(c)) In particular, this relates to staff following whistle-blowing procedures. It also relates to staff having regular and meaningful supervisions and appraisals.	1 January 2023
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— 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)(c)(e))	1 January 2023
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(b))	1 January 2023

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: 3 Siskin Drive, Middlemarch Business Park,
Coventry CV3 4FJ

Responsible individual: Gary Thompson

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sarah Orriss, Social Care Inspector

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