

2650948

Registered provider: Ubuntu Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home is registered to provide care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties. This is the home's first inspection since opening in November 2021.

The previous manager, who was registered with Ofsted in November 2021, resigned and left the company in January 2022. An interim manager was employed, but they left their post in March 2022 and did not submit an application to register.

The new manager commenced their role in April 2022 and has submitted an application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2022

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	inadequate
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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: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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Not previously inspected		
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Inspection judgements

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

At the time of this inspection, one child was living at the home and they have only lived here for a few months. This is the first and only child who has moved in since the home opened. Managers did not plan the child's move into the home well. This has impacted on the pace of the child's progress and experiences so far.

Managers did not consult with others to obtain all relevant information about the child's vulnerabilities before they moved into the home. This undermined the managers' ability to ensure that the staff were knowledgeable and skilled to meet all of the child's needs effectively. Consequently, this child experienced a turbulent time when moving into the home. The new manager has sourced more information about the child to address any shortfalls.

Staff do not always follow the child's health plan and monitor their progress effectively. For example, the manager was not aware that the child has missed a vaccination, or recommendations from health professionals regarding limiting the child's intake of certain foods and drink. A lack of a coordinated plan means that the child's health needs are not always met.

Rewards and sanctions are used to encourage the child to behave positively. However, some sanctions are excessive rather than restorative in nature. For example, one child was not allowed to go to the park for two weeks following a time when he had refused to leave the park. This restricted the child's ability to socialise, play and make friends.

Staff do not regularly review and update children's records. For example, documents tracking the child's progress and the child's care plan do not contain relevant information. This means that staff are not able to measure the child's achievements or what further support they may need.

The home is modern, suitably decorated and furnished. The child's bedroom is personalised and clean. However, other aspects of the home need maintenance and repair. This does not create a homely environment for children to live. The manager took action during the inspection to address the immediate issues with the environment.

The child's educational progress has improved since they came to live here. Staff successfully support the child with their learning and development. The child is doing well and making good progress with their learning and school attendance. This is despite their school being some distance away from the home. As a result, the child's potential to achieve academically is increased.

Staff support the child well to maintain important relationships with family members. They communicate with social workers to review the arrangements for family time. As a

result of staff's understanding of the importance of the child spending meaningful time with their birth family, the child has a sense of belonging and connection to their family.

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

Managers and staff did not fully understand the child, their needs or how to support them emotionally when they first moved in. This limited staff's ability to provide good support to promote positive behaviour. This resulted in some behavioural incidents and restraints. The new manager recognised this weakness and took action immediately. As a result, incidents are decreasing and staff are providing better care to meet the child's needs.

Initially, staff did not have a good understanding of how to manage risk and to keep the child safe. Some important information was omitted from risk management documents. This has since been rectified, and staff now have all the information they require to ensure that they can manage and respond to any potential risk.

Staff do some good work with children in helping them to understand unacceptable behaviour and learn different coping strategies, such as how to keep themselves safe around smoking. However, this is not consistently applied to all aspects of the child's life and their choices. Staff are not proactive and persistent to help the child to understand harmful behaviours. For example, while staff are addressing the issue of smoking, they are not supporting the child in recognising other important ways they can improve their behaviour.

Managers fail to complete necessary recruitment checks to ensure that all staff, including staff employed through an agency, are safe and suitable. For example, managers did not obtain all the relevant information about staff and whether they have the skills to meet the child's needs. In addition, when concerns were raised about the suitability of one staff member, the appropriate risk assessments were not completed.

The child told the inspector that he liked living at the home, and he had some positive relationship with staff. Furthermore, the child felt listened to and did not raise any concerns about the care he receives.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leadership and management of the home has not been stable since the home opened. The registered manager and responsible individual resigned from their posts not long after the home was registered. Since then, an interim manager was appointed, but left. A third manager is now in day-to-day charge of the home and has submitted an application to register. A new responsible individual is also in post. This instability had impacted negatively on some of the child's experiences when they first moved into the home.

Overall, leaders and managers have failed to develop a good understanding about the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Inconsistent leadership, and ineffective monitoring and oversight, mean that managers do not identify and act quickly on shortfalls to improve children's safety, progress and experience. However, the current manager has been in post since March 2022. Since being appointed, they have quickly identified weaknesses in the home and are starting to bring about positive change. An effective action plan is ongoing to address the shortfalls.

Managers are yet to address shortfalls raised by the independent person. This means that little progress has been made to improve. Previous managers have not effectively monitored the quality of care, including restraint and incident records, to address shortfalls. Monitoring and oversight have improved since the new manager was appointed.

Managers have not ensured that all staff have the skills and training to meet the needs of the child. For example, none of the core staff have received training in the home's chosen therapeutic model of care. This has the potential to compromise the child's progress and development. However, the new manager is starting to address this shortfall.

To start with, the child experienced inconsistent staffing which impacted poorly on the quality of care they received. Staff vacancies required managers to use staff from other homes in the organisation to care for the child. However, staffing has recently become more stable. The manager is supporting staff to instil boundaries and routines for the child. This is providing the child with more consistent care and supporting their progress. As a result, the child has become more settled and is starting to develop positive relationships with the staff team.

Staff confirmed they feel supported by the manager and deputy manager and have a positive relationship with them. However, the quality of supervision that staff receive is variable. Although some staff receive regular supervision, managers do not always use supervision effectively to monitor staff progress and professional development. This does not promote staff development and improve practices within the home.

The statement of purpose is not up to date. This document does not provide correct information about the level of support the home offers, or reflects the changes in staff. This means that Ofsted and local authorities do not have the most up-to-date information about the care provided.

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 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. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that staff follow children's health plans.	17 June 2022
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. 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;	17 June 2022

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; help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful; 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; and de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(ix)(xi)) This specifically relates to managers and staff ensuring that they support children to keep safe. This also relates to staff supporting children to explore their emotions and build positive relationships.	
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	17 June 2022

risk of harm; 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 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)(v)(vi)(d)) This particularly refers to staff ensuring they understand risk and that risk assessments are up to date. It also relates to managers ensuring that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children.	
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; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; 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)(e)(h))	17 June 2022

This particularly refers to managers ensuring that all staff have a consistent approach to managing children's behaviours. It also relates to managers ensuring that all staff receive specific training to meet children's needs. It also relates to managers ensuring they use internal monitoring systems more effectively.	
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. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)) This particularly refers to managers ensuring consultation with professionals takes place, so that they have the relevant information in relation to risks to children.	17 June 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— 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)(d)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that they have all the relevant information about the staff before they work with children.	17 June 2022

The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that all new staff receive regular and reflective supervisions.	17 June 2022
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— details of the child's behaviour leading to 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 effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (2) (3)(ii)(iv)(v)(vii)) This particularly refers to managers ensuring that all relevant information is contained in behaviour management records.	17 June 2022
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))	17 June 2022

This relates to managers and staff ensuring that all children's records are regularly updated.	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that any sanctions used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)
- The registered person should ensure that the home's statement of purpose is reviewed and updated. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page, paragraph 3.6)

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: 2650948

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Ubuntu Group Limited

Registered provider address: Ubuntu Group Limited, 28 Christie Way, Wellington, Telford TF1 2GJ

Responsible individual: John Leachman

Registered manager: Post Vacant

Inspector

Patrick McIntosh, Social Care Inspector

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