

2661346

Registered provider: Woodford Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties. The provider has two other children's homes and is part of a commissioning partnership contract with eight local authorities.

This home registered with Ofsted on 14 February 2022. This is its first inspection.

The home has been without a registered manager since 31 May 2022. The current management arrangement has been in place since 20 August 2022. The interim manager is suitably experienced and qualified. This manager is a consultant and the provider is recruiting for a permanent manager.

The interim manager facilitated this inspection. The responsible individual also took part. Two children were living in the home at the time of this inspection. The inspectors spoke to both of them.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 September 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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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: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have positive experiences at this home. They receive good-quality care that meets all their needs and helps them to make progress.

Staff skilfully build positive relationships with children and gain their trust. They use empathy, compassion and their skills to help children to make positive changes in their lives. This results in children's improved sense of identity and well-being. One child's social worker reported an improvement in the child's emotional health.

Children have a strong voice. They make significant contributions to their care plans, safety plans and behaviour contracts. Listening and respecting children's views, wishes and feelings are central to how staff relate to children.

Children are involved in lots of activities and make happy memories. Staff help children to understand their life-journey and build their confidence to plan for a positive future.

Children's improved attitudes towards education and learning play a significant part in their progress. One child said that he really enjoyed going to school.

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

The risk-management practices in the home are effective. Staff understand risk and they know how to safeguard children.

Positive relationships between children and staff members underpin the good safeguarding practice in the home. With staff support and targeted individual work, children become safer.

Staff use a restorative approach to help children to develop better ways of coping with difficult feelings, such as anger. There have not been any major incidents in the home.

Incidents of children going missing from home are infrequent. Staff always follow missing protocols when children go missing.

Staff have meaningful talks with children about the risks relating to going missing and the risk of being groomed online. As a result of children's increased awareness, they are safer. However, individual risk assessments do not provide sufficient information about online safety.

Staff have a good understanding of child sexual and criminal exploitation. They work jointly with a network of professionals to safeguard children from these risks.

Procedures for dealing with allegations against staff are effective. Staff share concerns appropriately and leaders and managers take swift action to safeguard children. This includes reflecting on incidents and identifying any learning.

Safer recruitment practice is not always followed. For example, a gap in a member of staff's employment history had not been explored or recorded on their file.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led and managed in line with its statement of purpose. The home's culture is child-centred and aspirational.

Team-working is strong. Staff do their best to support children. Staff are suitably qualified and undertake an extensive training programme. Staff are committed to continued learning and development.

The manager has created a supportive environment for staff. However, not all staff receive regular supervision.

Leaders, managers and staff are excellent advocates for children. They appropriately challenge others to help children to have better lives. The social workers for both children said that the staff are making a positive difference to the children's lives.

The manager is taking actions to improve the home. Although some records are of excellent quality, this is not consistent throughout. These minor recording shortfalls are not having a negative impact on the care that the children receive.

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 registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home. (Regulation 27 (1)(a)) Specifically, the registered person must appoint a permanent manager for the home and this person must apply to register with Ofsted.	10 October 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— the individual is of integrity and good character; 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)(d)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that there is a record of the explanation of any gaps in employment and that there is clear evidence that any risk-management plans relating to suitability of staff are carried out.	30 September 2022

The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	30 September 2022
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that online safeguarding is sufficiently covered in the children's risk assessments and safety plans. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure that records are kept more efficiently and organised in ways that allow for easy access and monitoring. ('Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 14.2)

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: 2661346

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Woodford Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: Abacus House, 14-18 Forest Road, Loughton IG10 1DX

Responsible individual: Paul Carr

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Seka Graovac, Social Care Inspector
Zara Salim, Social Care Inspector (shadow)

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Piccadilly Gate
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M1 2WD

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