

2661346

Registered provider: Woodford Children's Services Ltd

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 aged between 11 and 17 who have social and emotional needs. The home is part of a commissioning partnership contract with eight local authorities.

A suitably qualified and experienced registered manager has been in post since June 2023.

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

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 August 2024

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
---	------

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

Date of last inspection: 24 January 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/01/2024	Full	Good
08/09/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children live in a warm and welcoming environment. Staff are thoughtful, culturally sensitive and nurturing. Children participate in planning meals, cooking and playing games with staff.

Staff build meaningful and warm relationships that enable children to trust their carers so they can talk about their worries and have help to manage their early trauma experiences. Children understand how to make a complaint and have access to advocacy. Their wishes and feelings are central to the ethos of the home.

Staff write about children sensitively, taking into account that they may wish to read their records in the future. This provides a record of their childhood and the care they receive, adding to their sense of belonging and identity. Children are supported to understand their culture and are offered creative and innovative ways to understand their heritage.

Children are offered a wide range of enrichment activities. Children are supported to access education, and there is a focus on attending school full time. There is a relentless focus on children's development and providing opportunities for them to excel and achieve.

Children are helped to stay healthy. Children receive support from mentors, are helped to understand the risks of vaping and have access to sexual health advice.

Careful thought is taken when children are moving into and out of the home. The manager plans for children who are new to living in the home, ensuring that they visit before they move in and are welcomed by both the staff and other children.

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

Children feel safe in the home, and this allows them to build trusting relationships with staff members who they get along with well. One child described a staff member they were close to as 'auntie'.

Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding and what to do when a child needs to be protected. Staff have access to attend regular training that is relevant to the children who are living in the home. However, not all staff are sufficiently informed of the organisation's whistle-blowing policy.

The provision of therapeutic oversight allows children to have bespoke responses so that risks reduce and children are safer. However, it is not always recorded that children who are at considerable risk of mental ill health are afforded the protection of shared safety planning by both the home and the placing local authority.

The staff know what to do when a child goes missing from care. Since the last inspection, the manager has shown tenacity in escalating concerns with the police and local authorities so that agreed interventions can be introduced to reduce the risks for children. Multi-agency strategy meetings are held to share information. However, these minutes are not always added to children's records.

When a local authority agreement is in place for children to spend time with their parents and relatives, staff ensure that they stay in touch with the children. However, it is not always clear if children are where they are reported to be. For these children, there are agreed protocols in place with the local authorities.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The responsible individual supports the energetic and responsive registered manager. The leadership team, along with a therapist, works together to understand and respond to children's needs.

Staff receive regular supervision and training. The statement of purpose informs the relationship-based practice. However, there is incorrect information about professional roles.

Progress has been made since the last inspection. However, further work is needed to ensure that records tell the story of the child's journey and include the information about the involvement of multi-agency partners and social workers. For example, key-work sessions do not always align with the risks and issues noted in placement plans and risk assessments or strategy meetings. Furthermore, key-work records do not always capture the discussions that help children to stay safe.

Feedback from professionals, parents and children is overwhelmingly positive, emphasising the strength of communication between the registered manager and the networks for individual children. The tenacity of the registered manager in the work with the children and professionals is consistently highlighted by professionals, and this allows children to progress and do well.

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 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 any care that is arranged or provided for a child that— relates to the child's development (within the meaning of section 17(11) of the Children Act 1989) or health; and is not arranged or provided as part of the health service continued under section 1(1) of the National Health Service Act 2006, satisfies the conditions in paragraph (3). The conditions are— that the care is approved, and kept under review throughout its duration, by the placing authority. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(d)(i)(ii) (3)(a)) This relates to ensuring that mental health concerns are responded to with safety plans that include the local authority as the lead agency with responsibility for the child.	30 September 2024
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—	30 September 2024

mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. 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 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; help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(vi)(vii)) In particular, ensure that key-work sessions align with the areas noted in placement plans, risk assessments and safety plans.	
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— help each child to understand how to keep safe. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(ii)) In particular, ensure that this is discussed in key-work sessions.	30 September 2024
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)) In particular, update information in relation to police contacts.	30 September 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the policies for the protection of children include information about whistle-blowing, with clear procedures for how a staff member should report to an appropriate authority any concern they have about a child within the home being either at risk of, or already experiencing, significant harm. This should include ensuring that staff are aware of the policy. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.15)

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 Ltd

Registered provider address: Abacus House, Forest Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 1DX

Responsible individual: Carmel Willis

Registered manager: Sheila Doherty

Inspectors

Naintara Khosla, Social Care Inspector
Monique Lindsay, Social Care 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://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

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 2024