

2666995

Registered provider: Assure Care Homes Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to two children with social and emotional difficulties. It is owned by a private organisation. At the time of this inspection, there were two children living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2024.

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 September 2024

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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 15 August 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/08/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
17/10/2022	Full	Good
12/04/2022	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, in August 2023, there has been a new staff team and a high turnover of staff. This has impacted on the consistency of care that children have experienced. Despite this, the new management team has implemented a wide range of changes across the home and these have had a positive impact on children's progress. For example, children are better able to self-regulate their feelings and emotions, due to changes in how staff respond to their behavioural needs.

One child's experience of moving to the home was very difficult and staff initially struggled to provide the care and support the child required. Despite this, staff have persisted and made significant progress in supporting this child to settle. The child's social worker said that there had been a 'massive difference' in this child since they moved to the home.

Children have developed some positive relationships with preferred staff. Staff take great pride in recording the experiences that children have and this helps children to recognise the progress they have made.

Children's wishes and feelings are clear, and staff listen to them and support their aspirations. However, for one child, there has been disagreement between the placing authority and the home's management team about their care plan and how this is communicated. The child has not received advocacy support.

One child does not currently have any education provision, and their education, health and care plan is significantly out of date. The management team has raised this with the placing authority, and tutoring arrangements will soon be in place. The other child has recently started at a local college and staff have been supporting them to work towards travelling independently.

Children's health needs are well supported, and staff ensure that children receive the support they require.

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

Staff ensure that children are kept safe from harm and carefully support children to make informed decisions about their lives. The recently formed management team works well together but, in one example, their response to a safeguarding incident was inconsistent and did not prioritise the safety of children. This did not impact on children.

Staff have supported children's emotional and behavioural needs through an unsettled period in the home, and children are now benefiting from more consistent care. At times, staff have needed to use physical intervention to keep children safe. On two occasions,

staff did not use the correct technique in accordance with the child's plan. Managers responded effectively to address this and set out expectations.

Children receive effective help and support to manage their feelings and emotions, including after difficult events. Staff are curious and keen to support children to reflect and learn. Managers demonstrate clear oversight and strive to support staff to ensure that children benefit from natural consequences when things do not go to plan.

Staff who are new to the home benefit from a clear induction and are appropriately vetted. However, not all staff have completed the home's mandatory training. Leaders and managers understand the connection this has with promoting consistency for children, promoting their welfare and the wider development of the staff team.

The management team is committed to ensuring that children benefit from consistent routines, according to their individual needs. The registered manager has carefully listened to feedback from staff and children in determining the most effective strategies to support children's well-being.

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

Since the last inspection, there has been a high turnover of staff and temporary staff have been relied on to ensure children's everyday needs are met. This has impacted on the ability of the registered manager to embed a strong consistent culture within the staff team.

While the management team has carried out regular recruitment, several members of staff have left after a very short period as they were unable to support children's needs. Leaders and managers are making changes to the recruitment process to better understand the knowledge and skills of potential new staff.

There have been several occasions when staff, including the registered manager, have not followed directions in children's plans. For example, there have been two medication errors due to children's medication protocols not being followed correctly, despite all staff having taken comprehensive medication competence assessments.

The full management team has only been in place for a short time and is working on developing their joint management approach, but this is not yet consistent. For example, the registered manager's feedback regarding the deputy manager's management of a safeguarding incident contradicted the approach that was taken in practice. Managers recognise this could have undermined staff's ability to keep children safe.

Leaders and managers are receptive to feedback from external monitoring. However, on two occasions, the home was not visited by an independent person, and in one regulatory report, information was contradictory and not gathered in a timely manner. In addition to this, there have been several incidents in the home that have not been notified to the regulator or notifications have been significantly delayed, which has prevented important regulatory oversight.

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 staff— provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iv)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all staff working in the home provide consistent care to children and support them in accordance with their identified needs.	31 December 2024
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— ensure that each child— is given appropriate advocacy support. (Regulation 7 (1)(b)(iii))	31 December 2024
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation;	31 December 2024

an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. (Regulation 44 (1))	31 December 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all staff consistently follow the home's policies and procedures for the benefit of the children in the home's care. They should ensure that all information about presenting risks to children is made available to staff and that children's welfare is paramount. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.20)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.11)

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: 2666995

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Assure Care Homes Ltd

Registered provider address: Unit 4, Northbrook Industrial Estate, Hollybrook Road, Shirley, Southampton, Hampshire SO16 6PB

Responsible individual: Christopher Newman

Registered manager: Tracey Anderson

Inspector

Ashley Edwards, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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