

2668747

Registered provider: Within Reach Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is managed by a private provider. The home provides care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties. At the time of this inspection, two children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2022, when this home was registered.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 July 2023

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	requires improvement to be good
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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: 3 October 2022

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
03/10/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

The home is made up of individual self-contained flats with a shared outside space. The outdoor space has a pool and games that children have been using in the warm weather. Both flats are clean and tidy, and children's rooms are decorated with their input with signs of personal touches in each room. Communal areas are sparse in both flats, and some cupboards are locked due to the needs of the children.

Progress made by children living in this home is mixed. One child has been at the home for a short period, and during this time there have been a high number of incidents. The other child had made good progress from a difficult starting point. However, in recent weeks there has been an increase in significant incidents. As a result, additional safeguards and restrictions have been reintroduced for this child in line with their current needs.

Since the previous full inspection, there have been 16 new members of staff working in the home. A recent unanticipated increase in staffing ratios for one child is largely responsible. As a result, some staff have not yet been able to establish strong relationships with the children, and responses from staff to children are not always consistent.

Children do form warm and trusting relationships with some staff members. Staff speak affectionately about children and take pride in their achievements. One child told the inspector they feel as though staff at the home help them and that they are making progress.

Due to the needs of the children, they are not yet attending full-time education, and both have tutors who visit them at the home. One child has been attending their sessions consistently and is working towards mathematics and English qualifications. Professionals were positive about the support and encouragement staff offered this child around their education. The other child has only recently begun to attend their tuition sessions. Professionals told the inspector that this had been a big achievement for this child given their starting point.

Concerns were raised by one education professional that this child is not yet receiving any English tuition. During the inspection, the manager advised that a multi-agency decision had been made to escalate these concerns with the local authority who hold responsibility for this child's education.

Children's moves to and from the home are well planned. Children meet staff and visit the home before moving in. One child told the inspector they felt their move had gone well, and they felt prepared for this.

However, when deciding if this home is a good fit for any new child, managers have not fully considered any potential impact on children already living in the home. Nor have the skills and experience of the staff team been considered in detail when a decision is being made about whether the child's needs could be met at this home.

Feedback from some external professionals was positive. Multi-agency working is used well at this home with regular meetings being held for both children and communication with the home is good.

However, some professionals raised concerns about incidents being managed consistently and some gaps in records or information shared. This was reflected during the inspection.

Both children have a journal that contains pictures and a written record of the significant events, activities and trips they have taken while living here. Staff have also recently started an achievement record for each child to record and celebrate their progress. Both records are designed for children to take with them when they move on from the home.

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

This home specialises in caring for children with complex needs, meaning incidents of self-harm are frequent. When children do self-harm, staff respond empathetically, providing support and medical attention as required.

When children go missing from the home, staff respond appropriately by following them, looking for them and reporting them missing.

Children living in the home also have deprivation of liberty safeguards in place. One child told the inspector that they understand why the restrictions for them are in place, that staff explain these to them, and they understand what they need to do to get restrictions lifted. The child also said they feel they could talk to staff members if they had any worries, and that they feel safe at this home.

The home has a high number of restraints recorded. The circumstances where restraint is used are appropriate and in line with children's support plans and risk assessments. However, there are also a high number of attempts at restraint recorded where staff have been unable to effectively hold or guide a child.

When incidents happen, staff do not always have the confidence, experience, or skills to effectively de-escalate them. Some members of staff also report not always feeling supported by colleagues during incidents.

For example, the manager has recently identified several occasions where the police have been called by staff for support inappropriately. This has placed children at risk of criminalisation. The manager has recently reviewed the home's policy around the use of the police and has revisited this guidance with members of staff.

Practice is underpinned by appropriate risk assessments and care plans that include input from the in-house therapeutic lead. Weekly debriefs led by the therapeutic lead are also in place to give the team the opportunity to reflect on their practice. However, this guidance for staff is not consistently reflected in practice.

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

The registered manager is a child-focused and dedicated professional who has worked hard to address some of the shortfalls identified at the previous inspection. For example, the recording of many restraint records is now comprehensive, and management oversight is much improved in this area.

Some older records do not contain specific information, such as the length of time some restraints were used for. The manager has identified and addressed this issue, and additional detail can be seen on more recent records. However, there remains some inconsistency in this area. For example, it is not always clear from records if or how issues around practice have been addressed with staff.

There have been several incidents at the home that have been exacerbated by a lack of oversight from managers or action from staff. During one recent incident, a child caused damage to a safe containing medication. The medication was moved to a locked drawer. However, several days later, the child was able to access this drawer, remove the medication and take an overdose. This incident could have potentially been avoided if the safe had been repaired promptly and if staff had followed appropriate medication procedures.

Staff have taken appropriate safeguarding training and specialist training in areas such as self-harm and first aid. But in some circumstances, staff told inspectors they were uncertain about how best to support children. For example, some staff were not clear on when or how to use additional window restrictors, and some staff were not clear about how and when they would use ligature cutters.

Staff told the inspector they find managers and senior care workers supportive. Supervision takes place at the agreed frequency, and staff report they find this helpful and reflective. Supervision records are recorded promptly but do not always evidence reflective discussion or document lessons learned.

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 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; 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 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; 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; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children; (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(iv)(v)(ix)(xi)) In particular, ensure that staff have the necessary relationships and understanding to effectively de-escalate	30 August 2023

incidents and support children to develop alternative ways to manage difficult feelings.	
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; 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. 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)(c)(d)(e)(h)) In particular, ensure that staff have the necessary skills and experience to support children effectively and that any practice issues are addressed promptly.	30 August 2023
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—	30 August 2023

understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; protect and promote each child's welfare; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iv)(ix)) In particular, ensure that staff are given clear and consistent guidance on how to support children, and that this guidance is recorded clearly in children's records.	
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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) In particular, ensure that before a child moves into the home, their needs and risks are considered alongside the needs and risks of any children already living at the home, as well as the skills and experience of the staff team.	30 August 2023

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the language used by staff and written in records is appropriate, child-focused and consistent. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that plans for children's education continue to be kept under regular review and that prompt action is taken to escalate concerns if the local authority are not providing children with an appropriate level of support. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- The registered person should ensure that supervision records provide an accurate record of discussions that have taken place and that where practice and development issues have been discussed, that these are recorded. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)

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: 2668747

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Within Reach Services Limited

Registered provider address: Hazlewoods, Windsor House, Bayshill Road,
Cheltenham GL50 3AT

Responsible individual: Tracey Caswell

Registered manager: Danielle White

Inspector

Janet Jauregui, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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