

2672566

Registered provider: Embrace Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private provider and provides care for up to three children. The home provides care to children with social and emotional difficulties.

A new manager has been appointed but is not yet registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 February 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement
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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 previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
Not previously inspected		

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement

Children live in a homely environment that is well maintained and decorated. Children report that they are encouraged and supported to contribute their own ideas about the decorating and furnishing of the home and to personalise their own bedrooms. This results in the creation of a sense of belonging and ownership on the part of the children and pride in their surroundings.

Staff support children to form and maintain positive relationships with their family through well-planned and well-managed contact. Staff demonstrate an understanding of the children's feelings and anxieties and develop a personalised approach to ensuring that contact with families is as positive as possible. Staff have worked very closely with one child and their family in order to facilitate the plans for the child to return home.

Individual health needs are well managed in close collaboration with health professionals, and in some instances, progress has been achieved.

Staff do not demonstrate an understanding of the importance of the protective nature of the relationships they have with children. One child has been unable to form meaningful and trusting relationships with staff, which would enable the child to share their hopes and fears. This has resulted in the child withholding information from staff about relationships outside of the home and the impact of these on their life.

Children have not experienced a structured educational provision while living in this home. The registered manager has not escalated concerns about the lack of educational provision. One child aspires for their future and is keen to engage in education in order to achieve this. The new manager has sourced individual tuition for the child and has arranged for the child to visit a local college with a view to enrolling on a vocational course of his interest. The child is very excited about this.

Poor admission practice resulted in two children being missing from home and one child being physically assaulted. This resulted in the unplanned ending of the placement for one child and negatively affected both children's experiences of the home. One child left the home without any celebration of their time there or any acknowledgement of successes and achievements.

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

Safeguarding training has been provided. However, a strong safeguarding culture has yet to be embedded at this home. For example, staff do not demonstrate an understanding of the risks to one child that result from their lack of knowledge of friendship groups and activities which the child may be involved in.

The assessment of risks linked to the location of the home does not take into consideration the risks posed by key environmental factors, for example the proximity of a river, the railway station, railway lines, a local park that is isolated at night and a number of bridges over the river.

Records are not maintained in a manner that makes information easily accessible to staff. Key documents relating to the safety of children have not been read or understood by all staff. Managerial oversight has failed to highlight the inconsistencies in record-keeping.

Children's records do not contain the necessary consents in order to ensure that staff are authorised to engage services that are required to meet all of their needs. This means that children are left vulnerable should they require emergency services or treatment.

The registered manager has failed to notify Ofsted about a significant incident at the home and has failed to notify Ofsted of other incidents in a timely manner. This affects Ofsted's ability to monitor the home and to ensure that the children are effectively safeguarded.

An ineffective alarm system failed to alert staff during the night when a child left the home. Lack of action on the part of managers and staff resulted in the child leaving the home unnoticed on a further occasion. Managers failed to address this issue, and this had not been remedied at the time of this inspection.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement

The registered manager left the organisation in February 2023, and a new manager has been appointed who is yet to submit her application for registration. She has begun a thorough assessment of the quality of care provided and is working closely with staff to formulate a robust development plan to address identified gaps. Throughout the inspection, the new manager demonstrated a detailed understanding of the systems and processes required in order to effectively manage a children's home.

The identified failures and shortfalls in the running of the home did not emerge during the registered manager's supervision sessions. This includes significant safeguarding issues in the home at the time.

There has been a significant shortfall in actively and regularly monitoring the quality of care being provided to the children by the staff team and the impact that this has on the children's lives and outcomes.

Staff report that they receive supervision. However, sampling of supervision records indicates that supervision is not being used effectively to sustain staff's motivation and focus. Issues raised in supervision, which are important to the quality of care being provided, have not been addressed. The records of staff supervision are sparse and do not show that staff are provided with the opportunity to reflect on their practice and the impact that this has on children's lives.

There has been a shortfall in relation to the processes of administering medication and the required careful recording of this. The registered manager failed to ensure that individual records were kept in relation to the administration of medication to one child and failed to rigorously scrutinise or monitor this process, placing the child at risk.

The home's statement of purpose does not meet requirements and does not set out the range of needs of the children for whom the home is intended. It does not provide an accurate description of the services offered by the home.

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 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 risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are located so that children are effectively safeguarded; that the premises used for the 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)(iv)(vi)(c)(d))	1 May 2023

In particular, this relates to the development of detailed risk assessments for each child that clearly outline the strategies to be used by staff to reduce the risk of significant harm. In addition, this relates to ensuring that risk assessments take into consideration the location of the home, and risks which this may pose to a child. Also, ensure that methods used for monitoring children in the home are effective.	
The leadership and management standard is that the 1 May 2023 registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children to inspire to fulfil their potential: and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))	1 May 2023
The care planning standard is that children— 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 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)(b) (2)(a)) This relates in particular to ensuring that children's assessed needs can be met by the service without detriment to the children already living in the home.	1 May 2023
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1.	1 May 2023

The registered person must provide a copy of the statement of purpose to HMCI and make a copy of it available upon request to— a child, or a child for whom accommodation in the home is being considered; and a parent of a child, or a parent of a child for whom accommodation in the home is being considered. (Regulation 16 (1)(2)(b)(c)) In particular, this relates to ensuring that the statement of purpose includes an accurate description of the range of support provided by the staff.	
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular the registered person must ensure that— medicines kept in the home are stored in a secure place so as to prevent any child from having unsupervised access to them; medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child; and a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c))	1 May 2023
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— includes the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 (19)(20) in relation to each child; are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)) In particular, ensure that children's records contain copies of relevant signed consents and that these are accessible to all staff in the home working with the children living there.	1 May 2023
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—	1 May 2023

there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. A notification made under this regulation— must include details of— the matter; the other persons, bodies, organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter must be made or confirmed in writing. (Regulation 40 (4)(e) (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))	
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. A visit by the independent person to the home may be unannounced. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5))	1 May 2023

In particular, this relates to the robustness of the independent visitor's investigations and recording of their findings.	
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report"). The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home. The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5)) In particular, the quality-of-care review report must consider the impact of the care provided on the lives of the children and their outcomes. The report must relate to one children's home only and should be produced on a six-monthly basis.	1 May 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the complaints procedure is followed and that records include whether the complainant is satisfied with the response. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.1)
- The registered person should ensure that when children placed in a home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on roll for some other reason, the registered person and staff work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. If no education place is identified by the placing authority, the registered person must challenge them to meet the child's needs under Regulation 5. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff strive to build positive relationships with children in the home and develop a culture of openness and trust that encourages them to be able to tell someone if they have concerns or worries about their safety. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.11)

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: 2672566

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Embrace Care Limited

Registered provider address: 17 White Friars, Chester CH1 1NZ

Responsible individual: Paul Wilcox

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Jacqueline Georgiou, Social Care Inspector

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