

2672782

Registered provider: Doonamis Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a private company and provides care for up to three children. It provides emergency, short-term to long-term care for children.

The manager and the home registered in September 2022.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 January 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **inadequate**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected and their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

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
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Not previously inspected		
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Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

One child has made some progress since they have lived at the home. However, several serious incidents, poor behaviour management and ineffective managerial oversight mean that children are not safeguarded. As a result, the home has been judged inadequate.

Two children are currently living at the home. Since the home registered in September 2022, one child has moved out and one child has recently moved in.

The manager failed to ensure that the needs of one child could be met and that staff had the skills and knowledge to provide effective care for that child. The staff could not safely manage and support the child. Consequently, the child experienced an unplanned move from the home.

Staff do not gather children's wishes and feelings about the home. Children's meetings are sporadic and there is no record of children's views being sought in other ways. Key-work records are not detailed and do not reflect conversations that children and staff have or any actions or outcomes. As a result, children do not feel involved in their plans.

Staff carry out random room searches without a record of their rationale. There are no records of the action taken when prohibited items, such as cannabis grinders, are found in children's bedrooms, or how these are disposed of. Staff fail to engage children in discussions about these events and how the room search has affected them. Therefore, opportunities for reflection with children to encourage their safety and well-being are potentially lost.

Children's records are sparse and do not give a clear insight into their daily lives. Children's records are not written in a way which is meaningful to them.

There are no detailed health plans for the children. Consequently, information on children's individual health needs is incomplete. There is a lack of suitably clear and detailed guidance for staff to follow. This has the potential to result in an inconsistent approach to managing children's health needs.

Staff have good links with the children's education providers, which has ensured positive partnership working. Staff actively encourage children to attend education, which has resulted in significant improvements in children's attendance.

Staff welcome the children's families into the home and ensure that children can safely keep in regular contact with the people who matter to them.

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

Leaders and managers lack knowledge and understanding of safeguarding procedures and the regulatory requirements. This affects their ability to have effective safeguarding oversight of the home and ensure that practice safeguards children.

The manager failed to consider the risks faced by two children who were moved into the home at the same time. The manager did not consider how these risks could affect the children's welfare and safety. As a result, this poor matching meant that risks to both children of substance misuse, going missing from care and exploitation increased.

One child, who is at high risk of exploitation, has been missing from the home for long periods. The records of children going missing from home do not include sufficient details about the actions taken by staff to keep children safe. The manager has not reviewed the records of when children go missing to assure herself that all possible actions have been taken. Staff lack professional curiosity when children return, and there is no evidence of independent return home interviews. Opportunities to identify patterns and trends and better understand risks are therefore missed.

One child smokes cannabis at the home, and drug paraphernalia has been found in a child's bedroom. However, managers have failed to assess this risk adequately and have not actively reduced this risk.

Risk assessments are of poor quality and staff do not keep these updated after each incident. Consequently, staff may not be aware of the presenting risks or concerns for children. There are no behaviour management plans to help staff understand behavioural triggers or guide them in how to manage behaviours and prevent escalation.

The staff's responses to safeguarding incidents have not been proactive or robust. At times, children have not been safeguarded.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The registered manager has been in post since September 2022. She is working towards a relevant level 5 qualification.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that the required records are kept at the home. There are no records of the consequences given to children, behaviour management plans or health plans. Staff are not provided with guidance on how to meet children's health and behavioural needs consistently.

The manager has failed to notify Ofsted of safeguarding incidents. Consequently, Ofsted has not been aware of concerns relating to incident management.

The manager has not undertaken sufficient training in safeguarding and child protection. Therefore, they have not managed safeguarding concerns and incidents effectively. Records of safeguarding concerns and incidents are inadequate.

Staff recruitment records do not demonstrate that safe recruitment processes are followed. Records of identity checks are not held and references from the applicant's most recent employer are not always taken up. This does not safeguard children from unsuitable people gaining employment at the home.

The current management monitoring of the home is poor. Senior managers have failed to identify the significant and widespread shortfalls found during this inspection.

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 children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. (Regulation 7 (1)(c)) In particular, take effective action to respond to children's wishes communicated during house meetings and key-work sessions.	17 February 2023
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans; understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding; take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child's health and well-being needs; and	17 February 2023

understand and develop skills to promote the child's well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))	
* 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; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)) In particular: ensure that assessments of risk are accurate, clear, up to date and identify relevant information, allowing staff to manage risks and help children to understand risks and improve their own safety; ensure that clear plans and guidance are in place to carefully consider matching arrangements; ensure that leaders, managers and staff understand risks associated with substance misuse, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation and incidents of children going missing from care, and act on these risks to help children become increasingly safe.	17 February 2023

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 have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; 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)(c)(f)(h)) In particular: ensure that leaders and managers monitor the quality of the care and practice at the home effectively, identify shortfalls and take action to address them; ensure that leaders, managers and staff have a sound understanding of safeguarding policies and procedures; ensure that safe recruitment procedures are followed and clear records are maintained; ensure that all records are clear, accurate and up to date and provide the necessary guidance for staff to enable them to safely care for the children.	17 February 2023
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and	17 February 2023

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))	
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— a description of the measure and its duration; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(iv)(vii) (b)(i)(ii) (c))	17 February 2023
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))	17 February 2023

The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(e))	17 February 2023
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* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff only search children's bedrooms after informing them and gaining their permission, unless there are reasonable grounds for believing that there is a risk to the child's safety or well-being. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.20)
- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping. In particular, ensure that all plans for children are up to date and that incident forms are detailed. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 2672782

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Doonamis Limited

Registered provider address: 117 Kingfisher Close, Shoeburyness, Southend-on-Sea SS3 9YB

Responsible individual: Sophie Zwizwai

Registered manager: Fungai Chikwanda

Inspector

Trish Palmer, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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