

2675297

Registered provider: Closer 2 Home Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It provides care for up to four children who have experienced social and emotional difficulties.

The manager is suitably experienced and has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 January 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 25 September 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
25/09/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/10/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Two children were living at the home at the time of the inspection. Since the last inspection, two children have moved on. One child had a positive experience of moving on from the home, but the other child did not. This child went to visit his family and while there, was told he would not return to the home. This was because staff and managers believed that they could no longer meet his needs safely. The child did not have the opportunity to say goodbye to the other children or staff. In addition, managers did not inform staff of the child's move until he had left. This matter has contributed to ongoing friction between the manager and staff, which is now impacting on the quality of care given to children.

Children do not receive a consistently good quality of care that responds to their individual needs. For example, staff have failed to put support measures in place promptly for a child who has been repeatedly expressing that she is struggling with her emotional well-being.

The home environment is not warm and welcoming environment for children. Some areas in the home require improvement. For example, one child's bedroom does not have any curtains or blinds, which does not give the child privacy. The wardrobe and chest of drawers in their room have been broken for several months. In addition, some areas of the home need decorating, and windows at the front of the home have no curtains or blinds, which means the general public can see into these areas from the outside.

Children do not live in a relaxed environment with positive relationships between the adults caring for them. There is conflict between staff and managers around what food is purchased for the home. While one child is happy with the food provided, another is not. In addition, there is an unresolved issue regarding the dietary needs of some staff linked to their protected characteristics. Managers have not been proactive in facilitating equality and diversity work, for staff and children, to find a resolution so that all feel listened to and valued.

Despite these shortfalls, children are making progress from their starting point. Both children are in education and their attendance is very good. One child aspires to pursue a career in health care. Staff have supported another child to rebuild relationships with their family, and this has enabled the child to enjoy more family time.

Staff support children to access various activities in the home and community, such as horse riding, shopping, going to the cinema and cooking family dinners together. As a result, the children have some positive experiences.

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

The manager and staff are failing to role model positive behaviours for the children and children are aware of tensions between staff. This has left one child requesting to move on from the home as they feel that this is having a negative effect on their emotional and mental well-being.

Managers do not ensure that the necessary checks have been undertaken for agency staff working in the home. For example, it is not clear if agency workers have a full employment history and suitable reference checks. As a result, it is not clear how managers have satisfied themselves that agency staff are suitable to work with children.

The manager and staff have failed to assess whether the use of bedroom door alarms for all children is necessary and proportionate. They were unclear about whether door alarms can be isolated to individual bedrooms to ensure that they are only used when necessary and to safeguard individual children.

Medication is not always administered by staff as prescribed. For example, staff failed to administer medication to a child for three consecutive days. Fortunately, this did not have a significant impact on the child's health, but it raises concerns about medication management in the home.

There is conflicting information about how managers respond to complaints from children. Records reviewed indicate that complaints have been managed well. However, staff and children are of a different view. One child said they are unhappy with the outcome of a complaint they raised, and managers did not offer them options about how they could take this forward.

When children go missing from home, staff respond appropriately. They follow the clear plans in place. Self-harm incidents have also been managed well by staff. This good work does contribute to keeping children safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The home has been without a registered manager for twelve months. One previous manager withdrew their application before being registered with Ofsted. The new manager is experienced and has applied to register with Ofsted.

There is discord between the manager and staff, which children are aware of as they have been party to inappropriate discussions regarding these issues. Staff lack professional boundaries and have a disregard for their roles and responsibilities in caring for the children. Although managers and staff are aware that this has created a negative atmosphere in the home, issues are unresolved and continue to have a negative impact on the children. When staff meetings are scheduled to provide staff with the opportunity to discuss any issues, most staff do not attend.

The staff shared that there is poor communication from managers and senior managers about care planning decisions made for the children. For example, they were not told about a child's move on from the home until this had happened. This has left some staff feeling not valued and not respected by managers.

There has been a high staff turnover in the home, and so the manager has used agency staff. On some occasions, the ratio of external staff caring for children has been more than that of permanent staff. However, the manager has used external staff who know the home and the children well. Nevertheless, lots of changes in staffing mean that children do not receive consistent care.

Staff do not always turn up for work as scheduled and give clear reasons why. When staff have informed managers that they cannot come to work, this is often at short notice. This does not provide children with continuity of care and is unsettling for them. The manager and staff attribute this to low staff morale and staff feeling tired from covering shifts and working overtime. There was one occasion when staff left the home without ensuring that there was adequate staff left to safely look after the children. The staff did not inform managers of their intention to leave the home. This poor practice does not promote children's welfare.

Senior managers are aware of the shortfalls. They are in the process of devising action plans to address shortfalls and bring about improvement to the home and the care provided for children. Two compliance notices have been issued to help improve standards of care.

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— 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; provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iv)(vii)(c)(i))	3 March 2025
*The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust;	3 March 2025

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— help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; 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; 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; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same; that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(iv)(vi)(vii)(ix)(x)(b))	
*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—	3 March 2025

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; 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)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h))	
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; that arrangements are in place to— plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(iii))	3 March 2025

The registered person must ensure that— the privacy of children is appropriately protected; any limitation placed on a child’s privacy or access to any area of the home’s premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (a)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))	3 March 2025
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children’s home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d))	3 March 2025
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))	3 March 2025

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: 2675297

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Closer 2 Home Limited

Registered provider address: 1 Newington Close, Coventry CV6 1PQ

Responsible individual: Howard Woolfenden

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Rumbi Mangoma, Social Care Inspector

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