

2675297

Registered provider: Closer 2 Home Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private provider operates this home. It provides care for up to four children with social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties due to past trauma.

The previous registered manager voluntarily cancelled his registration with Ofsted in July 2022 and is no longer working for the company. There is an interim manager in post who has submitted their application to register.

Inspection date: 30 January 2023

Date of last inspection: 19 October 2022

Judgement at last inspection: Requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At these inspections, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The care of children

Three children live in the home. They have lived in the home since before the last inspection. No children have left the home during this time.

The home offers ample space for children to be together and have time alone. Children's bedrooms are decorated to suit their individual styles and preferences. Children's photos are displayed throughout the home. This supports children to have a sense of belonging.

Children and staff share positive relationships. Children told the inspector that they can talk with staff and feel listened to and supported. For example, when children return home from school, staff will ask how their day has been and children will openly chat about their experiences. As a result of staff taking an interest in children's lives, children feel supported and openly talk with staff.

Children engage in activities and hobbies that are related to their personal interests. For one child, this includes weekend drama lessons in line with their ambitions for their future.

All children have school placements. One child's attendance is sporadic due to going missing from the home or choosing not to attend. Other children attend regularly and are making good progress. Children told the inspector that staff support them to get to and from school and to do their homework.

One child has made a complaint. This was reviewed quickly, and restorative measures were put in place to repair relationships. The child was happy with the outcome.

The safety of children

Children told the inspector that they feel safe. They said that staff care for them and help them when they need it. Children get on well with each other. This further supports their feeling of safety within the home.

Staff respond appropriately and inform relevant professionals and family members when one child frequently goes missing from home. They actively look for the child in known locations and continue to contact them to encourage them to return home. Staff offer to drive significant distances to collect them and return them home safely. When the child returns, they are given a warm welcome and staff speak with them

to understand their feelings. The child's social worker says that staff 'have a good understanding of their needs' and 'manage their missing' from home appropriately.

Children receive specialist help in relation to their known and emerging needs and lifestyle choices. When children refuse specialist support in relation to substance misuse, staff work with children to help to educate them around the dangers of using substances.

Blind cords in children's bedrooms and communal areas of the home were not secured to the wall. This has the potential to be a hazard to children. The outbuildings have been used as a home gym. However, they are currently locked and children are not permitted to use these due to internal damage caused by a flood.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

The manager has been in post for a short time. She recognises the strengths and weaknesses of the staff team and the impact that these have had on the quality of care that children receive. She recognises that they are on a journey of improvement and still have work to do. She spoke honestly about outstanding requirements and recommendations that continue to be ongoing since the last inspection. The manager and staff have worked hard to meet four requirements made at the last inspection. Consequently, the safety of children has improved.

Staff still need to undertake a variety of training to increase their knowledge and understanding and enable them to carry out their roles to the best of their ability.

The manager is working on completing staff supervision regularly. This area was not reviewed during this inspection.

Where staff practice has fallen short of the expectations, the manager has taken swift action to address this. This has included the responsible individual liaising with relevant professionals to seek guidance and implement further safeguarding practices.

Staff are not recruited in line with safe recruitment practices as per schedule 2. Reference checks do not check staff employment dates, safeguarding concerns or if there have been previous disciplinary matters. This lack of due diligence and scrutiny means that managers cannot be assured that staff working in the home are safe to do so.

The manager is working with partner agencies to support children. This has included seeking the host authority to complete return-home interviews with a child, due to the placing authority being some distance away. The manager is proactive in requesting children's statutory paperwork when there are delays.

Some previous recommendations and requirements have been restated as they have not yet been met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/10/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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 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) (2)(a)(c)(f)(h)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff are sufficiently trained and skilled to support the children in the home. Leaders and the manager must ensure that there are effective internal and external monitoring and reviewing systems. This requirement was raised at the previous inspection and is restated.	6 March 2023

The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. 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)(3)(d)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that safer recruitment checks are completed in respect of all temporary staff who work in the home. This requirement was raised at the previous inspection and is restated.	6 March 2023
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home's statement of purpose is kept under review. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.5)
- The registered person must ensure that staff record all rewards and consequences imposed on children. Leaders and the manager must ensure that these are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and appropriate. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)
- The registered person should ensure that the impact risk assessment reflects that they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plan. They must ensure that they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children, alongside the experience and skills of staff to meet all the children's needs. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.5)
- The registered person must ensure that they maintain good employment practice. They must ensure that supervision of staff is regular, supportive and reflective; and that this safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of ensuring that

children's records are clear, accurate and objective. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.). This relates to children's blind cords being fixed to prevent them from being a hazard to children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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

Jodie Lewis, Social Care Inspector

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