

2675807

Registered provider: Virtue Therapeutic Care and Education (East Sussex) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately run and is registered to provide care for up to eight children who may experience social and emotional difficulties. Therapy is available to all children if required. There is a registered school on site. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision on this site. There are currently five children living in the home.

The home has been without a registered manager since October 2022. The interim managers have not applied to be registered.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 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: 10 January 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/01/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

The process of moving new children into the home lacks scrutiny. There is insufficient consideration as to whether the staff are able to meet the competing needs of the children as a group. The compatibility of new children living in home lacks scrutiny, which potentially undermines the ability of the staff to meet the needs of the children as a whole group. This is having a negative impact on some children's ability to settle and thrive.

The staff make an effort to deliver personalised care and promote positive outcomes. However, the varied needs of the children, and their different interests, make relationship building difficult. As a result, some children do not have a positive experience of living at the home.

The children and staff who have lived or worked in the home for some time have established positive relationships. However, changes in staff and lack of continuity have negatively affected the ability for some children, and new staff, to build positive relationships.

Staff promote positive relationships between children and their families. The staff plan and supervise these visits well to ensure that the children enjoy their family time. However, information shared with staff and managers by the children, regarding concerns about peer relationships in the home, is not always discussed with parents. Consequently, parents do not have a full picture of their children's experience of living in the home.

Children are encouraged and supported to attend education. The staff work closely with school staff to ensure that children who attend the school on site remain on school premises during their educational time. This helps the children understand the importance of educational routines.

Staff value the children's interests such as going fishing. The staff support the children to develop independence skills. Staff encourage children to complete age-appropriate tasks such as shopping and seeking suitable local jobs. This helps the children feel empowered to confidently take the next steps towards adulthood.

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

The children have complex needs and some of these needs potentially pose a risk to others. Some staff members are targeted by some children. On occasion, this has resulted in these staff receiving injuries.

Discussions are not held quickly with children and staff after every incident. Consequently, staff do not have the opportunity to reflect on incidents to understand if things could be avoided, or better managed, in the future. The children's individual risk assessments are not reviewed regularly or updated after significant events. This potentially undermines staff's ability to keep children and staff safe.

There is peer-on-peer bullying in the home. Reports of bullying behaviours have not been addressed effectively by staff. There is no strategic plan or approach in place to reduce this behaviour. Children's risk assessments do not reflect the high levels of concern, or provide guidance for staff on how to manage this effectively. Consequently, children involved feel unsafe and are at risk of emotional and physical harm.

Staff rarely use physical intervention. They support the children to manage their emotions and feelings through de-escalation techniques. However, when incidents involving children engaging in violence occurs, these are not always clearly recorded. The circumstances leading to incidents, and actions taken to manage these, are not clearly detailed in the reports. The managers' oversight of incidents is ineffective. The review fails to explore any emerging patterns and trends, or scrutinise staff's practice. The lack of effective management oversight risks poor practice not being quickly identified and addressed.

Some areas of the home are clean and well decorated. However, some children's bedrooms have broken door frames, and damage at the home has not been repaired quickly. The first floor shared space, therefore, does not feel homely. Some window restrictors are broken. As a result, the children have accessed the roof.

Children do not usually go missing. However, there are clear protocols for staff to follow when children do go missing. The staff follow the children and encourage them to return safely.

Leaders and managers adhere to safer recruitment processes. They ensure that all checks are completed during the recruitment of new staff.

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

The home has been without a registered manager since October 2022. Two new acting managers have joined the organisation. The provider has not informed Ofsted of the current management arrangements and neither individual has applied for registration. Therefore it is not clear what the current management arrangements are and there is unclear management oversight of the home. As a result, records are not up to date and important information could not be located.

Staff have not received good-quality regular supervision. When supervisions do occur, records are sometimes brief, or aspects of care are not addressed. Despite managers being aware of weaknesses in the home, there was a lack of clear and decisive action to address shortfalls.

Managers do not have clear oversight in respect of the training staff have completed. This is particularly important as the managers and some staff are new. As a result, managers are unable to demonstrate that all staff have completed training in physical restraint, medication and preventing and managing bullying. This has the potential to undermine staff's ability to meet the needs of the children.

The new managers are building relationships with external professionals. However, the lack of consistent clear leadership in the home has undermined communication with children's social workers. Some serious incidents have not been shared with the relevant external agencies, including children's placing authorities. This undermines effective partnership working. It also undermines the ability of those with parental responsibility to understand the quality of care and support the child is receiving.

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that the children's placing authority is informed of incidents of harm, whether observed by staff or reported by children.	20 October 2023
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on mutual respect and trust; In particular the registered person to ensure— that staff— encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them; and that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a) (2)(a)(iii)(xiii)(b))	20 October 2023
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—	20 October 2023

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; 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 designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(b)(d)) In particular, ensure that children are not able to access unsafe spaces in the home. Furthermore, ensure that children's risk assessments are updated after incidents and each significant event.	
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 requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(g)(ii)(h)) In particular, ensure that all staff complete core training.	20 October 2023

If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of— the name of the person so appointed; and the date on which the appointment takes effect. (Regulation 27 (2)(a)(b)) In particular, provide full details of the manager to Ofsted. Furthermore, ensure that the acting manager submits an application for registration.	20 October 2023
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— details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure; 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)(ii)(iv)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	20 October 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children’s home is a homely and domestic environment. Children’s homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations; however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to

maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

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: 2675807

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Virtue Therapeutic Care and Education (East Sussex) Limited

Registered provider address: Moran House Suites 7-8, 449-451 High Road,
Willesden, London NW10 2JJ

Responsible individual: Matthew Wakeling

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Jane Balfe, Social Care Inspector

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