

2684680

Registered provider: Headstart Residential Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and provides care for up to two children who may have learning disabilities and/or experience social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

The home was registered with Ofsted in September 2022. The manager has been in post since May 2023 but has yet to apply to register.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 September 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 20 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/03/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There are currently two children living in the home. Staff work hard and provide individualised care. However, this has sometimes been challenging, given the very different needs of the children. As a result, children's experiences of living in the home have varied. One of the children has been able to develop a sense of permanence and belonging, whereas the other child has not. The ability of one child to settle has been undermined, largely due to circumstances outside of staff's control.

Staff understand the importance of education for children. Both children have education delivered by the school attached to the home. One child has made significant improvement and now has good school attendance. However, one child has recently refused to attend; continued efforts are made by staff to support them to re-engage with their education. Children's certificates are displayed in the home to celebrate their successes.

When children move into the home, they are provided with weekly therapeutic support. One child has engaged well and has made meaningful progress. Staff understand the importance of this approach to care and continue the therapeutic ethos in their own interactions with children.

Staff encourage and support the children to spend time with people who are important to them.

The children are provided with a variety of activities which have helped enrich their lives. The staff creatively offer activities to keep one child positively occupied, in an attempt to manage an increasingly unsafe situation.

The home is clean and tidy. A redecoration programme is currently in progress and the manager is exploring ways to better personalise the home.

The quality of relationships between the children and staff vary. One child has been able to form important and positive relationships with staff, whereas for the other child, meaningful connections have yet to develop. Staff are alert to this and do try. However, they struggle to make a positive impact given the complexities of the situation. Staff are well intentioned and their efforts to communicate with both children are made with respect and care.

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

The staff understand their responsibilities in ensuring children are safe. The manager continually modifies staff rotas to ensure there are sufficient staff to meet the increasingly challenging and changing needs of the children.

The manager is liaising closely with one child's placing authority to review their increasing needs. There is no bullying in the home. While the children continue to avoid each other's company, the staff help the children manage their differences safely.

The manager and key workers ensure that there are individualised risk management plans in place for children. These plans identify children's vulnerabilities and provide staff with clear strategies to manage the risks. One child's care plan is comprehensive and gives really clear guidance. However, one child's plan is not always kept up to date, due to their continually changing needs. The staff do know the child's changing needs and the current risks are being managed by staff. However, staff say the absence of up-to-date plans places greater pressure on permanent members of staff to guide new and agency members of staff.

On one occasion, a significant safeguarding incident was not notified to Ofsted. As a result, the regulator has not been fully able to maintain oversight of the home and the actions taken to keep children safe. The manager is new and has demonstrated she is receptive to any constructive guidance in this regard.

The staff use physical intervention occasionally. They are suitably trained and use restraint only when necessary to keep children safe. However, some physical intervention reports lack detail. Furthermore, debriefs with children after the event are not always carried out and/or recorded.

One child sometimes goes missing from the home. The staff know what to do and act in a caring way. For example, they always follow the child and work hard to encourage them to return safely. They work well in partnership with police and another agencies.

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

The manager has been in post since May 2023. The manager has yet to apply for registration with Ofsted. This is the manager's first managerial role and she has not received the level of support needed. Consequently, she has sometimes been overwhelmed and there are gaps in her understanding of her role and responsibilities. However, she is keen to learn and understands the significance of her role.

The manager is ambitious for the children. Presently, the manager and staff team are under a great deal of pressure trying to keep one child safe. The manager is liaising with the child's placing authority but future plans remain unclear. Consequently, care for this child has become reactive and services around the child are not always working well together.

Staff work well together and their support for each other has become fundamental to their work. However, a perceived lack of transparency and support from senior

leaders means there is a lack of confidence in the team and some staff's morale is low. Some staff do not feel supported and valued by senior leaders.

The shortfalls in senior leadership support and oversight have had a negative effect. The new manager has not had comprehensive support and challenge. As a result, there has not been effective oversight of all aspects of the service.

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 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— 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)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that records capture discussions held with staff and children following any measure of control or discipline and that the record has been signed to confirm that it is accurate.	28 December 2023
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; 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—	28 December 2023

help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship; and that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)(vii)(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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; 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)(h)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all significant incidents are evaluated with scrutiny, taking into consideration any possible learning outcomes that can be implemented in children's risk management plans or to support the development of staff.	28 December 2023
The care planning standard is that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the registered person to ensure—	28 December 2023

that each child's relevant plans are followed; that staff help each child to access and contribute to the records kept by the registered person in relation to the child. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(c)(f)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that there are up-to-date records on file relating to children's care, such as an up-to-date 24-hour behaviour management plan.	
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; or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(e))	28 October 2023

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: 2684680

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Headstart Residential Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 1 Swanwood Park, Gun Hill, Heathfield TN21 0LL

Responsible individual: Caroline Melia

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Jane Balfe, 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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