

2685998

Registered provider: Guidance Care

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home provides care for up to two children who may have social and/or emotional difficulties.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in July 2022.

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 November 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	inadequate
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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: 14 September 2022

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
14/09/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

At the time of the inspection, two children were living in the home. Three children have moved out of the home since the last inspection. Children's experiences of living in the home vary because of inconsistencies in staff practice. Some staff do not care for children in line with their individual plans. This does not enable children to learn what is expected of them.

Not all children are attending or engaging in education. When children are not attending school, staff do not follow children's education plans. For example, one headteacher said work set by the school for one child is not completed. In contrast, staff have high aspirations for some children and support them to reach their potential. The manager advocated for one child with their placing local authority, which resulted in the child being able to carry out their preferred work experience.

Children who do not attend education do not have routine or structure to their day. Poor routines and sleep patterns negatively impact on children's well-being and progress. Some children are in good health and staff support them to attend routine health appointments. Other children do not have their health needs met. For example, the manager has not been proactive in challenging a delay for one child in accessing a specialist service to meet their identified health needs.

Staff enable children to spend time with their families. This supports children to maintain important relationships and build on their support networks for the future. Staff encourage children to take part in activities. This builds children's confidence and enables them to pursue their interests. Children's achievements are celebrated.

Children live in a spacious and bright home. However, outstanding repairs to some parts of the house detract from the otherwise homely environment.

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

Children's plans identify their known risks and provide staff with steps to take to keep children safe. However, staff do not always follow children's plans. This means that staff have struggled to de-escalate situations. This has led to an escalation in some children's risk-taking behaviours.

Staff sometimes lack professional curiosity. This means that children's risks are not fully understood. For example, one child told staff that he smokes cannabis daily. There has been no exploration as to who he gets cannabis from or how he funds this.

When staff search children's bedrooms, this is not managed sensitively. Records of searches of children's bedrooms do not include children's views. One room search was completed in the early hours of the morning. The child said that staff did the room search 'just because they can'. The manager identified that the timing of this search was not appropriate, however, did not explain this to the child.

When children go missing from home, staff do not always look for them. When children return home, they are not always offered an opportunity to speak to an independent person. This is a missed opportunity to understand why children go missing from home.

Physical interventions are not reviewed effectively by leaders or managers. The manager had not identified that one child had been physically restrained by a member of staff who had not been trained to hold children safely. This leaves children at risk of physical harm. The manager had not identified that there were two separate records for one physical intervention which contained contradictory information. This means that children's experiences are not understood, and the manager has not taken steps to address shortfalls in staff practice.

One child said that they felt safe and could speak to staff about any concerns they have. Staff support children to take manageable risks. This includes supporting children to become more independent and to take risks in line with their development, such as using public transport and cooking. Staff support children to understand their own risks and the steps they can take to keep themselves safe. This has included supporting children to understand the dangers of vaping.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Management monitoring systems are ineffective. The manager has not identified inaccuracies in staff recording or conflicting information in children's records. Staff responses to children are inconsistent. One member of staff said, 'Everyone [staff] does their own thing.' Management oversight of incidents does not provide staff with steps to take to keep children safe. This is a missed opportunity to guide and develop staff practice.

Children do not always feel that their views are listened to or taken seriously. For example, one child shared an allegation about a member of staff with the inspector. The child said staff 'do not believe me'. Leaders and managers were aware of this allegation prior to this inspection. This was not managed in line with safeguarding procedures and was not shared with the child's placing local authority or parents. This is unsafe practice and leaves children vulnerable to harm.

Feedback from external professionals is varied. One social worker said she had not received information about significant incidents or updates about the child's care. The manager has not taken steps to ensure that one child's parents have updates about their child. This means that the placing local authority and the child's parents have not been able to make informed decisions about the child's care plan.

Children's records do not distinguish between fact and opinion. In some instances, language used in children's records is blameful and derogatory. This has not been identified by the manager. This does not support children to understand their life experiences or the reasons for decisions made about their care.

The manager has contributed to multi-agency discussions which inform decisions made about children's care. They have worked closely with some external professionals to resolve matters for children. For example, the manager challenged a health professional about the prescription of specific medication for one child, which resulted in the medication not being administered.

Staff access a range of training which supports them to meet the needs of the children. The manager ensures that there are enough staff working in the home to meet the needs of the children. Staff feel supported by the manager. Staff take part in regular supervision and team meetings. However, records of staff supervision and team meetings do not evidence staff reflection and learning.

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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(vii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff undertake education with children who are not attending school in line with their individual plans.	26 January 2024
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—	26 January 2024

that staff help each child to— 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; that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff understand children’s health needs and that children access specialist services which are needed to meet their health needs.	
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; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)) In particular, the registered person must ensure the staff assess whether each child is at risk of harm and act in accordance with children’s plans.	26 January 2024
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.	26 January 2024

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—

ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;

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.
(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(e)(f))

In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff have the skills to meet the needs of the children and that staff provide consistent care for children in line with their individual plans.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff record information about children in a non-stigmatising way which distinguishes between fact and opinion. ('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: 2685998

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Guidance Care

Registered provider address: Unit 8 Sovereign Court, Wyrefields, Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire FY6 8JX

Responsible individual: Clare O'Connor

Registered manager: Nicola Reason

Inspector

Sally Griffiths, 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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