

2691652

Registered provider: Purple Ash Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately run and provides care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties.

There has been no registered manager since 1 July 2023. Ofsted did receive an application from a manager who is currently working at the home. However, this was later withdrawn. There is now another new manager who is in the process of applying to Ofsted.

There was one child living at the home at the time of the inspection. Another child had recently left the home.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 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	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: 15 August 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/08/2023	Full	Inadequate
16/05/2023	Full	Inadequate
17/01/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

The home has been through an unsettled period due to changes in leadership and management and the instability of staffing. The one child currently living at the home said, 'The entire staff team has changed.' This has recently settled, with the staff team being at full capacity and a newly appointed manager in post.

One child was moved on from the home due to significant risk factors in the community. Staff made attempts to keep the child safe but were not always able to prevent prolonged periods of the child being missing from care. However, the child did maintain a positive link with some staff after leaving the home.

The remaining child has made progress. Despite struggling to engage in education, they have improved in most areas of their life. This has enabled positive progress in their care planning.

The child has a variety of ways to share their views, wishes and feelings. Staff complete regular, varied and relevant direct-work sessions with the child that are positive and reflective.

The child has been sensitively supported to explore their identity. Consequently, they are starting to have a better understanding of who they are and who they want to be. This is in addition to staff providing good support with the child's individual cultural and religious needs.

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

When there were significant incidents linked to a child going missing from the home, the staff followed the appropriate safeguarding protocols. Staff took prompt action to reduce the risks to the child. However, return home interviews were not clearly recorded.

Staff had followed agreed processes to try and locate the child. There is evidence that the staff had searched local areas regularly and attempted to contact the child. The acting manager was proactive in sharing information. However, the recording and management of information were poor. This made it difficult to establish the exact times the child was missing from care when a multi-agency strategy meeting took place. There were times when other agencies cancelled these meetings. The provider failed to escalate this matter.

Physical interventions are used as a last resort. When they are used, there is good oversight and reflection.

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

The managers and staff have gone through a turbulent time, with poor inspection judgements, significant changes in staffing and a child who has moved on from the placement due to them being placed at risk. The deputy manager has stepped up and supported the acting manager to stabilise the home. The newly appointed responsible individual supported the manager in making the difficult decision to end a placement.

There were delays in leaders accessing the correct information in a timely manner. In addition, there was a delay in managers responding to an action plan following a local authority quality assurance visit. The responsible individual acknowledged this and commented that the recording systems are due to be replaced with a view to improving recording and management systems and processes.

Shortages, changes in staff and the use of agency staff have added to the strain. This has meant that recording and management monitoring have not always been of a good standard.

The newly appointed responsible individual was able to identify the shortfalls in leadership and management at the home and has implemented an action plan to address these shortfalls. Some of these changes are in place, and others are planned to be implemented.

Leaders and managers have not escalated matters when local authorities have not exercised their duties. Statutory social work visits, care planning delays and an out-of-date education, health and care plan were not escalated appropriately. This has the potential to lead to poor care planning for children.

Staff receive regular mandatory training and supervision. Staff say they enjoy working at the home and things are now more settled. Staff have not received training in a model of practice that is specifically set out in the statement of purpose. The staff training matrix is not up to date and does not hold the correct information.

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 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; 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; 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)(a)(f)(g)(ii)(h)) This specifically relates to managers embedding monitoring systems in the home to improve the quality of care. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	10 December 2023

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; seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child’s needs; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority’s or a relevant person’s performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child’s needs are met in accordance with the child’s relevant plans; and seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children’s home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c)(d)) This particularly relates to ensuring that the provider escalates delays in processes relating to statutory visits, strategy meetings, return interviews and progressing care plans.	10 December 2023
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. (Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 45 paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should ensure that emergency admissions are not taken unless the home’s statement of purpose and its capacity and support systems mean that it has the capability to care for children admitted at very short notice while continuing to offer high-quality care to children already living in the home. (Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.6)

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: 2691652

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Purple Ash Limited

Registered provider address: West Midlands House, Gipsy Lane WV13 2HA

Responsible individual: Thomas Haire

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Bev Allison, Social Care Inspector

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