

# 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 who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

A new manager has been appointed but has not yet registered with Ofsted.

### Inspection dates: 16 and 17 May 2023

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,** taking into account **inadequate**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

**Date of last inspection:** 17 January 2023

**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            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 17/01/2023      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate**

Several members of staff have recently left the home. This has impaired the children's capacity to form and maintain positive and trusting relationships with staff. One child said:

'It's hard, it's almost become normal for staff to come and then leave. They keep coming and I make a good relationship with them, then they leave. Makes me feel like there isn't any point getting to know them. It's just sad.'

Children do not always enjoy healthy and well-balanced meals. Although children create a weekly menu, this is not consistently followed. Instead, processed, takeaway and fast food is frequently provided. This does not support children to have a healthy lifestyle. It also obscures children's understanding of the impact that an unhealthy diet can have on their health and well-being.

Children's views, wishes and feelings are not fully considered. Although children's meetings take place regularly, their views are not acted on. For example, children are not asked about food choices or activities they may wish to take part in. Children are not given the opportunity to make informed choices about their lives. Staff have failed to ensure that children's views are fully heard and acted on wherever possible.

Staff struggle to manage some complex and challenging behaviours from children. For example, despite a child having one-to-one support, they were able to find a bottle from outside the home. They kept this in their possession and said that they were going to use it to cause harm to themselves. Staff were unsure of what action to take, and the inspector had to call the deputy manager for assistance. This lack of understanding places children at increased risk of harm.

Education provision is in place for each child. Some children missed a lot of formal education prior to moving into this home. Staff work to increase children's self-esteem and confidence. They sensitively support children to begin to feel able to engage in education. Staff have yet to establish clear routines for children on the days that they are not attending education. More structure is required during what should be a school day, to include education-focused support from staff.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: inadequate**

There has been an increase in incidents of one child going missing from care. Staff have not identified changes in the child's presentation that indicated they were unsettled. For example, one report detailed a child refusing their medication and pacing for approximately an hour. The staff said these are indicators that the child is unsettled and may go missing but did not act on this information. Furthermore, children have not routinely received a return home interview following them being

missing from care. There is a lack of reflection following incidents of children going missing and lessons have not been learned.

Children's medication has not always been administered in line with the prescriber's instructions. Gaps were identified in the medication records for one child. This had not been identified by the manager or investigated. This does not support the child's health needs to be met.

Staff recruitment procedures do not safeguard children. Managers have not been professionally curious when carrying out recruitment checks for staff from overseas. Managers have failed to request overseas checks to be carried out to satisfy themselves that staff are safe to work with children. Consequently, there is a risk that unsuitable staff may be employed to care for children.

The recording of physical restraints is of poor quality. Managers have failed to routinely evaluate reports to ensure that these contain all the required information. Furthermore, children and staff do not always receive debriefs to talk about the restraint. One incident that took place had not been recorded in its entirety for four days. A lack of effective oversight and reflective practice prevents lessons from being learned to reduce the risk of reoccurrence.

Children's individual risk assessments are of poor quality. They contain conflicting information, which does not provide staff with the best guidance. For example, one child's assessment states that they are allowed one hour of social time. However, in the same assessment, it later states that the child is allowed two hours of social time. On speaking to staff, they said they did not know how long the child was allowed. Consequently, assessments fail to provide staff with a clear understanding of children's needs, risks and vulnerabilities.

The location risk assessment does not provide evidence of consultation and feedback from professionals and the wider community. This means that the manager has not evaluated all the available information effectively and the effect this may have on vulnerable children.

The quality of recording following incidents is not sufficiently detailed. Records fail to provide clear and accurate details of events. This prevents strong management oversight of incidents. As a result, managers cannot assure themselves that incidents have been managed in accordance with the organisation's policies and procedures.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate**

A new manager leads the home. She is supported by the responsible individual and a newly appointed regional manager. This is a very new management team that is developing a joint approach to leading the home. However, there has been a deterioration in the quality of management oversight. Monitoring and review systems are ineffective. Leaders and managers have not addressed several shortfalls in care practice. For example, risk assessments do not include enough detail and direction, several physical restraint records had no management oversight, consequences have

been used that could be viewed as punitive, and one child has lived at the home for four months and still does not have a care plan. These shortfalls have the capacity to negatively impact on children's experiences.

One staff member reported poor management presence and inadequate support from on-call managers. This has resulted in staff contacting one another for support and direction. Staff say that they do not feel confident or comfortable asking leaders for help. One member of staff was told by managers, 'There is no need to call on-call for a disruptive child like this.' The staff member said that they were scared, and this has left them feeling traumatised. This is a potential risk indicator for the forming of a closed culture and a disconnect between managers and staff.

Managers have not provided staff with regular professional supervision. Several members of staff have not received reflective formal supervision. Consequently, staff have not received the support, guidance and direction they need. This is because of a lack of suitable management oversight. As a result, staff morale is low and staff retention is poor.

Staff do not currently have the required training to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and meet children's needs. For example, only one third of the team has completed training in safeguarding, self-harm, restraint and child criminal exploitation awareness. The lack of training for staff fails to provide them with the skills and knowledge they need to care for children and manage associated risks.

Basic support for staff, such as supervision, team meetings, coaching, development and reflective practice, has not been sufficient. Incidents in the home have not been thoroughly evaluated. When incidents have occurred, there is no record of discussion with staff to facilitate learning or to identify any poor practice. The written report for one incident, which took place three days before this inspection, has been left partially completed.

## 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     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| <p>The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>help each child to express views, wishes and feelings;</p> <p>regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care. (Regulation 7 (1) (2)(a)(ii)(iv))</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring that children are consulted about the day-to-day running of the home and are provided with an opportunity express their views and wishes following a physical restraint.</p>     | 25 June 2023 |
| <p>The health and well-being standard is that—</p> <p>the health and well-being needs of children are met;</p> <p>children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and</p> <p>children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff help each child to—</p> <p>achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and</p> | 25 June 2023 |

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| <p>well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>understand and develop skills to promote the child's wellbeing. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iv))</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring that children are provided with healthy and nutritious meals. It also relates to ensuring that children are taught about their health needs and allergies.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                     |
| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(b))</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring that children's risks are understood by staff and that plans and assessments accurately reflect needs and risks for each child and provide guidance to staff on the action they must take to keep children safe.</p> | <p>25 June 2023</p> |
| <p>*The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>25 June 2023</p> |

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| <p>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;</p> <p>ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(h))</p> <p>This specifically relates to managers embedding monitoring systems in the home to improve the quality of care. It also relates to the home having sufficient staff who are trained to meet children's needs.</p> |              |
| <p>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home.</p> <p>In particular the registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child; and</p> <p>a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(b)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring that medication is administered in line with the prescriber instructions. It also relates to ensuring that accurate records are maintained for medicines administered to or refused by a child.</p>                                                                                                                                             | 25 June 2023 |
| <p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. (Regulation 32 (1))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 25 June 2023 |

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| <p>This specifically relates to managers ensuring that appropriate action is taken to carry out all required checks for staff coming from overseas</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                     |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>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”)—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>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)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the manager ensuring that records of physical intervention are reviewed in a timely manner and that child debriefs are carried out within the required time frame.</p> | <p>25 June 2023</p> |

\* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

## Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides the opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. The home 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 any consequences used to address poor behaviour are restorative in nature, helping children to recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. This relates to consequences being punitive and not linked to the behaviour. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 46, paragraph 9.38)

## **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

**Responsible individual:** Anita Sharma

**Registered manager:** Sally Betteridge

## **Inspector**

Zoey Lee, Social Care Inspector

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