

2691652

Registered provider: Purple Ash Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run home provides care for up to three children who have emotional and/or behavioural needs.

There is a suitably experienced and qualified registered manager in place.

This is the home's first inspection.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 January 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: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Not previously inspected

Inspection judgements

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

Children's day-to-day basic care is good. However, they do not have positive nurturing relationships with all staff. Staff do not ensure that they are always available to spend quality time with children.

Staff do not always support children to socialise in the community or to develop hobbies and interests. Children are not always given opportunities to develop relationships with their peers in the home or to socialise with each other.

Children are supported to keep in contact with people who are important to them. However, children's plans for their contact arrangements are not consistently followed by staff. This has the potential to impact negatively on children's important relationships and to put children at risk if this is not put right.

Children are supported to engage in education. One child who had not attended school before living at the home now has an identified school placement. Another child has received good support from staff to manage their anxieties and has been able to return to education.

Children have not made any formal complaints. Children's concerns are recorded but not fully understood or responded to by staff. This has prevented one child receiving support. As a result, children do not always feel safe and well cared for.

Children's health needs are met and they are generally healthy. However, the manager does not discuss significant and sensitive decisions in relation to children's health with their placing social worker, to make sure that children's health plans are followed.

Staff ensure that children's cultural and identity needs are met but do not always write in a non-stigmatising way in children's records.

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

Children's behaviours, risks, relationships and interactions have not been adequately considered when children are matched and placed with one another. Children's needs and risks are not always fully understood by staff. This has resulted in staff prioritising their own protection and one child's placement being ended. The manager has learned from this and has better plans in place moving forward.

Children have identified staff who can support their emotional needs. Staff have supported children to identify safe words which help them to manage their anxieties. For example, when one child uses their safe word, staff take them out for a drive to

help them to calm. One child told the inspector that 'not all staff are supportive'. The manager is aware of the child's views, however, has not yet ensured that all staff are supporting them appropriately.

Staff do not support children to take age-appropriate risks. As a result, children are isolated and not supported to develop age-appropriate independent skills. One professional said that the manager 'does not always understand risk'.

Thorough recruitment processes are followed to ensure that only those adults who have been assessed as safe to work with children are employed to work in the home. Allegations are responded to appropriately.

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

There are some weaknesses in the management monitoring and oversight of risks. The manager acknowledges that improvement is needed and has plans in place to develop the home.

The manager has a positive vision for the home, however, is still developing in confidence. For example, one child was unsuitably placed and the manager did not challenge senior managers about this. Management oversight of the home is not yet consistently good.

The manager is aware that there are divisions in the staff team which have impacted on the team's morale. They have plans in place to develop the team. Children are also aware of the difficulties in the staffing team. There have been occasions when staff discussed their own personal information with children. As a result, children are not provided with consistent nurturing care.

Staff supervision takes place on a regular basis. The supervision documents do not always state when staff practice has been poor. Supervision focuses on staff's negative opinions about the home rather than their development.

The manager has ensured that there is good communication with professionals and all information is shared swiftly.

Staff have completed all mandatory training. However, not all hold the appropriate diploma qualification. The manager has ensured that rotas are drawn up to ensure appropriate staffing levels. However, the mix of experience and qualifications of staff are not always fully considered.

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
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 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)(b)) This particularly refers to risk assessments and care plans identifying known and potential risks for each child, and staff being skilled and confident in challenging and dealing with inappropriate and risky behaviour.	3 April 2023
The enjoyment and achievement standard is that the registered person enables children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— develop the child's interests and hobbies; participate in activities that the child enjoys and which meet and expand the child's interests and preferences; make a positive contribution to the home and the wider community; that each child has access to a range of activities that enable the child to pursue the child's interests and hobbies (Regulation 9 (1) (2)(a)(b))	3 April 2023

This particularly refers to children not being given opportunities to develop interests and hobbies in the home and the community.	
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 to aspire to their full potential; promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure – ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate 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)(f)) This particularly refers to the registered manager not having oversight of the low morale among staff and working practices of the staff team.	3 April 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they have a key role in seeking to develop the home's effective working relationships with each child's placing authority. These working relationships will also be key to success in delivering the care planning standard. This specifically refers to the manager making significant decisions about children's health appointments without approval from the child's local authority. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.3)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. This specifically relates to inconsistencies in recording and language used in children's records. ('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: 2691652

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Purple Ash Limited

Responsible individual: Anita Sharma

Registered manager: Sally Betteridge

Inspector

Corline Parker, Social Care Inspector

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