

2701100

Registered provider: CF Social Work Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by an independent provider. The home cares for up to two children who have social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2022.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 April 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded, and the care and experiences of children are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

At the time of the inspection, there was one child living at the home. Two children have moved in and out of the home relatively quickly due to escalating risks. This has made it difficult for children to experience positive goodbyes and prepare for their moves.

This is the first inspection since the home registered with Ofsted in November 2022. This inspection identified a considerable number of shortfalls in the leadership and management of the home and the protection of children. These are reflected in the overall judgement of inadequate.

Children are not attending school or engaging in educational activities. Staff understand the importance of education. They work alongside external agencies to secure educational input for the children. Despite this, staff are not consistent in how they implement and record home-based learning for children. As a result, children have made little educational progress.

Children do not have advocates, and the home's complaints procedure is not easily accessible. Staff do not routinely gather feedback from the children. Consequently, it is unclear how staff respond to children's views or how children participate in decision-making about their lives.

The staff team is depleted. This has led to a reliance on agency staff to cover staff vacancies. The manager has attempted to provide stability for the children by using the same agency staff. However, inconsistent staffing has made it difficult for children to develop trusting relationships with adults.

Children's interests and hobbies are encouraged. Construction bricks, board games and games consoles are provided at the home. Children are supported to enjoy community activities, such as go-karting and cycling. Trips to coffee shops and sports outlets are used as incentives to reward positive behaviours. Community engagement increases children's social networks and their understanding of social settings.

The home is clean and generally well looked after. However, some areas of the home require redecorating and need minor repairs. Some of the repairs are underway. However, this fails to provide a consistent standard of decor.

The staff generally encourage children to follow a balanced diet. However, the staff are inconsistent, and therefore children's access to healthy options are limited.

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

Children's risk assessments and behaviour management plans fail to provide staff with detailed risk-reduction strategies. The children's plans lack guidance and clarity for staff to follow. The staff are inconsistent in their responses and approaches to keeping children safe. This does not provide children with clear behavioural expectations and boundaries.

Children's friendships are supported. However, staff have not consistently ensured that risk assessments and background checks are undertaken to enable a child to have an overnight stay at a friend's house. This failure to follow safeguarding procedures has potentially put a child at risk of harm.

There have been incidents of children going missing from the home. Staff have responded in line with individual missing-from-care protocols. The manager has requested return home interviews. However, records fail to show if these interviews took place. Therefore, the manager is unable to respond to information provided by the children during the interview to reduce further incidents of the children going missing.

Impact and suitability assessments are weak and not consistently undertaken before children have moved to the home. The potential impact on the child already living in the home has not been thoroughly explored. Staff lack the skill and experience to meet the needs of the children and keep them safe. For one child, this has led to staff calling for police assistance to help manage serious incidents.

Staff safeguarding responsibilities are included in the four-day induction training for new staff. As a result, staff spoken to have a clear understanding of safeguarding and how to report safeguarding concerns.

Safer recruitment systems for new and agency staff are comprehensively carried out to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The manager is suitably experienced and is working towards her level 5 qualification. She is a visible presence at the home. However, staff vacancies due to staff illness, staff retention and recruitment difficulties have limited the manager's oversight. The manager has had to cover several shifts, which has impacted on her ability to meet other aspects of the managerial role.

Managerial monitoring is not effective. The children's risk assessments fail to consistently provide clear guidance for staff to follow to mitigate risks. The lack of managerial oversight has reduced the opportunity to keep children safe or to make continuous improvements to the quality of care.

Staff induction and probation have not been carried out in line with the home's policy. The induction programme for new staff has not been consistently followed.

Some staff have not worked in a children's residential setting previously. Failure to provide a suitable induction means that staff are not properly prepared for their roles.

The manager is approachable and supportive. However, some of the staff are not receiving regular supervision. A failure to provide regular supervision means that the opportunities for staff development and support are missed.

Leaders and managers have failed to update the location risk assessment. The responsible individual has not undertaken frequent checks on local crime statistics. The address of a local skate park has not been added to the assessment, following a safeguarding incident involving a child. This does not ensure that staff are continually informed about potential local areas of concern.

The manager has not demonstrated enough professional curiosity or challenged decisions made by the placing authority. The manager has not questioned the rationale for increasing a child's free time or challenged a social worker for permitting a child to access age-inappropriate console games. This has meant that staff have implemented decisions that are not in the best interests of the child. On occasion, these decisions have exposed children to inappropriate game content that is not intended for their age range.

Leaders and managers have not reviewed and revised the home's statement of purpose. This fails to include the experience and qualifications of the newly appointed staff. Therefore, the information about the home is not accurate.

The manager acknowledges that the new staff team needs time to develop their skills and confidence and to embed the ethos of the home. The manager is concentrating her attention on the development of the team. This will provide some stability for the child and improve the quality of care.

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 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; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to 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)(a)(c)(e)(h)) In particular; Ensure that managers monitor the quality of care and staff practice effectively. Ensure that new staff are provided with a thorough and comprehensive induction. Ensure staff receive regular supervision. Ensure the location risk assessment is updated to include crime statistics and addresses of local areas of potential risk for children.	18 May 2023

Ensure that children's risk assessments and behaviour management plans contain clear guidance for staff to follow.	
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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; 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)(ii)(b)) In particular, ensure that children's free time is thoroughly risk assessed and checks are conducted before children stay overnight with friends. Ensure that staff are consistent in their responses and approaches to children.	18 May 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— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;	8 June 2023

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; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(ix)(x)) In particular, ensure that staff receive training relating to post-traumatic stress disorder.	
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; 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. (Regulation 5 (a)(c))	18 May 2023
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff—	8 June 2023

help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care; ensure that each child— is enabled to provide feedback to, and raise issues with, a relevant person about the support and services that the child receives; is given appropriate advocacy support. (Regulation 7 (1)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(iv)(b)(i)(iii)) In particular, ensure that children's wishes and views are taken into account and that children have access to advocacy support and the home's complaints forms.	
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 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)(viii))	8 June 2023
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose.	8 June 2023

(Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a))	
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))	8 June 2023

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are provided with nutritious meals suitable for each child's needs. Where appropriate, children should be involved in choosing and preparing meals, and opportunities to sit together and eat should be promoted ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.8).
- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meet the needs of their children. In most cases, they will be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: 2701100

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: CF Social Work Limited

Registered provider address: 3-4b K Line House, West Road, Ipswich IP3 9SX

Responsible individual: Anton Clarke

Registered manager: Donna Turpin

Inspectors

Rachel Watkinson, Social Care Inspector
Leanne Lyon, Social Care Inspector

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