

2709854

Registered provider: Changing Lives Care Group Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and provides care for up to three children who experience social and emotional difficulties. At the time of this inspection, two children were living in the home.

The home has not had a registered manager since March 2024.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 July 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 30 August 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/08/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children live in a clean and homely environment where they enjoy having board games and toys to play with. Children have personalised their rooms to reflect their individual interests. For example, one child has their room decorated with gaming phrases and another child's room shows their enthusiasm for football.

Children take part in activities of their choice, such as baking, football and attending youth clubs. Relationships between children and staff have strengthened through shared activities that they enjoy together. Staff support children to spend time with those people who are significant to them. At family time, one child is always eager to share what they have baked.

Staff advocate for the children and recently supported a child to part take in their first school trip, meaning the child was able to have a positive experience with their peers and felt included.

Children are in full-time education in school. They have improved their school attendance and engagement in after-school activities since living at the home. One child's head of year said, 'There were good transitions in place to build up to full-time education, and there are a lot of things that school and home staff are working on together.'

Children's time at the home is captured in memory books. This will help them to understand and remember their experiences of living in this home when the time comes to move on.

Staff are equipped with the basic skills to meet the needs of the children they care for. However, managers did not consider all the needs of one child before they moved in. This element of placement planning was a missed opportunity to thoroughly explore the child's needs and how staff would meet these needs.

When children moved into the home, they did not have a clear transition plan, meaning that they may not have known what to expect from a residential care setting. One child did have a suitable moving-on plan to a linked home in the organisation. The staff who worked with the child moved with them, meaning that they were provided with continuity of care and support.

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

Children are supported to understand their risks when incidents occur. Appropriate conversations take place around individual risks and associated behaviours. Staff follow individual behaviour management plans, so they know what strategies to use to support the children.

The children do not go missing from home. However, when children who previously lived in the home have gone missing, staff have followed missing-from-home protocols. Children received debriefs and managers sought to understand why children chose to leave the home. Return home interviews have always been offered to children.

When children and staff have raised concerns about individuals, these have been taken seriously and reported to the local authority designated officer. This ensures that there is appropriate oversight of any safeguarding concerns.

Consequences are used to help children understand their behaviour. Staff are working towards using a more restorative approach when managing behaviour, such as rewards for positive behaviour and 'super positive' achievements. Consequently, the number of incidents is reducing and children are acknowledging the impact that their behaviour has on others.

Physical intervention is used to support children, in line with their behaviour support plans, to keep them and others safe when other strategies have been ineffective. Children have opportunities to express their views following interventions. Potential triggers are tracked and kept under review. Staff learn from each incident and take advice on strategies suggested by the home's psychologist.

There has been inconsistency in recruitment practices. Although references have been taken up and police checks completed, reasons for leaving previous roles and gaps in employment have not been fully explored. While this has had no impact on the care provided to children, it has the potential to do so.

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

The post of registered manager has been vacant since March 2024. An interim manager was in place until a new manager was recruited in June 2024. The home has therefore not been without management oversight.

The new manager has a clear development plan for the home, with a focus on staff development and recruitment. Their aim is to make sure that staff who are recruited have the right skills and experience. The manager is passionate about the outcomes for children and wants to make sure that children are prepared for independence and have the life skills they need to face challenges when living independently.

There have been some staff sufficiency challenges since March 2024 due to staff departures and the need for increased staffing to keep a child safe. The increased staff-to-child ratio meant that additional staff have been needed to cover shifts. When situations like this occur, agency staff and staff from a linked home in the organisation are used. As a result, there has not always been consistent care for children. Leaders have recognised this as a vulnerability and have been continuing to recruit staff. New staff have started working in the home, with some due to start soon following recruitment checks.

Some new staff have not been provided with supervision in line with the home's policy. Opportunities for reflective practice have been provided through debriefs and team meetings. However, new staff have not been provided with the support needed to improve their practice, especially during times when incidents increased in the home.

The manager is keen to upskill the team and has arranged several face-to-face training courses over the coming months. The manager is also working closely with the home's psychologist to develop a bespoke training course for staff, to meet the emerging needs of the children who have recently moved into the home. In the interim, strategies have been shared with the team and are being put into practice. This means that children's needs, as well as staff practice, are constantly being reviewed and action is taken to make sure children are provided with appropriate care.

Staff say they feel supported, and have provided positive feedback about the home's manager. One member of staff said, 'The manager is supportive, and I feel the organisation cares about the children and their staff.' External professionals said that children are well cared for and that they have had a positive experience of working with the home.

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 registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home. If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of— the name of the person so appointed; and the date on which the appointment takes effect. (Regulation 27 (1)(a) (2)(a)(b))	30 September 2024
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(2)(b)(i))	30 September 2024
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1)(3)(d))	30 September 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that every effort is made to achieve continuity of staffing so that children's attachments are not overly disrupted, including ensuring that the employment of any temporary staff will not prevent children from receiving the continuity of care that they need. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 51, paragraph 10.1)
- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. The statement of purpose is an important document in the process of care planning as it sets out the needs of children the home is set up and equipped to care for. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

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: 2709854

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Changing Lives Care Group Ltd

Registered provider address: Office 7, 35-37 Ludgate Hill, London EC4M 7JN

Responsible individual: Sheena Kalyan

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Karen Flanagan de Martinez, Social Care Inspector

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