

2718067

Registered provider: Blue Kite Children Care Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private organisation and is registered to care for up to five children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, four children were living at the home.

The registered manager post is vacant.

Inspection date: 12 November 2024

Date of last inspection: 5 June 2024

Judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We identified the following serious and/or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection:

- Leaders and managers do not ensure that there is a consistent approach to supporting all children to engage in education.
- Leaders and managers do not ensure that there is sufficient oversight in the home and of staff practice to keep children safe.
- Children's plans do not reflect the level of risk that they experience and do not include clear guidance for staff to follow to keep children safe.
- Leaders and managers do not ensure that children live in a well-maintained and homely environment, they do not ensure that any damage is repaired quickly.

Four children were living at the home at the time of the inspection. Two children have left since the last inspection. These moves were unplanned, which means that the children did not experience a positive ending. One child was spoken to during the visit.

The home was not well presented. Some of the curtains in the communal areas of the home were closed when the inspector arrived, which was after 10am. One child's bedroom had empty furniture boxes stored in the corner from furniture that had been unpacked several days before the inspection.

The wardrobe doors in one child's bedroom were missing. The child was spoken to during the inspection and confirmed the wardrobe had been in that state for some time. In addition, the living room door frame was visibly damaged. The patio area in the rear garden was untidy. Garden furniture was spread across the patio floor. Weeds had not been removed from the patio area, and an empty cup had been left outside. This does not make children feel valued and provide them with a warm and homely environment to live in.

There is an inconsistent approach to children's education. Following a request from one child to increase their school attendance, leaders and managers advocated for the child to spend more time in school. As a result of this, the child now attends school on a full-time basis. However, little has been done to support other children in the home to access an academic provision or learn at home.

Children are supported to spend time with their family. This allows them to remain connected to important people in their lives. However, care planning arrangements for children are not always carefully assessed in partnership with the placing authority. One child's social worker expressed concern that the child had been allowed to go on holiday and spend time with a family member without their consent. Such actions by leaders and managers place children at risk of harm and

do not ensure that staff are working in accordance with the child's placing authority plans.

There is not a proactive response to safeguarding incidents. Following an incident where a child smashed a window and attempted to jump out of it, leaders and managers failed to put preventative measures in place to reduce the risk of a similar incident occurring. Consequently, the child was not protected from further harm.

Children's risk management plans are incomplete. They do not include children's current risks and effective strategies on how staff can manage these. For example, a staff member was unaware of a child's risks around ligatures. Upon the review of the child's risk assessment, this information had not been documented.

Staff do not understand their roles and responsibilities to safeguard children. For example, direct work with children is not routinely completed when incidents occur. In addition, when children go missing from home, they do not always have the chance to take part in an independent return home interview. When these do take place, they are not always conducted in the desired timescales. This does not promote a culture of learning to prevent similar incidents from happening in the future.

Since the full inspection in June 2024, the management arrangements have changed. The registered manager resigned from her position with immediate effect in September 2024. The new manager has been in post since 16 September 2024. Currently, she has not registered with Ofsted.

Staff do not have regular supervision in accordance with the home's statement of purpose. This means that they do not have a chance to reflect on and learn from their practice. Furthermore, this is a missed opportunity for leaders and managers to identify and address any learning and development needs.

Management oversight of the home is poor. This has led to serious shortfalls in practice and the quality of care afforded to children being compromised. For example, there is no evidence that leaders and managers investigated a disclosure made by one child about a staff member's conduct.

Professionals report that communication between them and staff in the home is variable. Mental health partners have not always been informed about significant safeguarding incidents. This means children do not always receive the necessary specialist support. Positively, social workers report that changes in management arrangements have resulted in improved communication and partnership working.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that Ofsted is consistently notified about serious incidents. When incidents are shared, this is not always done in a timely manner, to ensure that the regulator has oversight of the children and the home.

As a result of these shortfalls, a case review was held and a decision was made to issue two compliance notices under regulation 12, the protection of children

standard, and regulation 13, the leadership and management standard. A restriction of accommodation notice was issued to prevent the home from admitting any further children.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/06/2024	Full	Good
20/11/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
05/07/2023	Full	Inadequate

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(c)(i)(ii)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that furniture is in a good state of repair. In addition, that the external areas of the home, specifically the rear garden, are well maintained.	24 December 2024
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 each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans;	24 December 2024

support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; 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; help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training, or employment and to prepare for future care, education, or employment. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(vii)(ix))	
*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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and 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)(vi)(b))	9 December 2024

Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that risk management plans accurately reflect children's risks and provide staff with clear guidance on how to manage these. Leaders and managers must understand children's associated risks. Leaders and managers must ensure that direct work is completed with children following safeguarding incidents.	
*The leadership and management standard are 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; 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; 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)(f)(h)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that staff receive supervision regularly. Leaders and managers must ensure that they use monitoring systems to regularly review the quality of care afforded to children. Furthermore, leaders and managers must ensure that staff consult with partners to ensure that there is a multi-agency approach to meeting children's needs.	9 December 2024

In addition, leaders and managers should ensure that staff receive training on attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autism spectrum disorder, to support them in their care role.	
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; that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child’s placing authority; that each child’s relevant plans are followed; that, subject to regulation 22 (contact and access to communications), contact between each child and the child’s parents, relatives, and friends, is promoted in accordance with the child’s relevant plans. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(c)(d)) In particular, leaders and managers must effectively consider how to meet the needs of children admitted into the home and how new admissions may impact on children already living in the home. Leaders and managers must ensure that children are supported to arrive at and leave the home in a planned and positive way.	24 December 2024

The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(e)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that serious incidents, such as disclosures made by children, are shared with Ofsted in a timely manner.	24 December 2024
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*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when children go missing from home, they are always offered an independent return home interview on their return. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should ensure that children are supported and encouraged to display positive behaviour, particularly around sharing food with other children living in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.11)
- The registered person should ensure that following a physical restraint, children can take part in a debrief about the incident with someone who was not involved in the restraint. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.50)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2718067

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Blue Kite Children Care Limited

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

Responsible individual: Thomas Haire

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Chibuzo Otache, Social Care Inspector

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