

2735311

Registered provider: Youthworx London Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to five children with social and emotional difficulties.

The home and manager registered with Ofsted in August 2023. The registered manager does not have the required qualification in leadership and management of residential care for children and is not yet enrolled onto the relevant course.

There were three children living at the home at the time of this inspection.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 March 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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children say that they are happy living at their home. The home has a friendly and welcoming feel. Leaders, managers and staff focus on ensuring that children's personalities are known and that children feel valued.

Children build positive and trusting relationships with staff. Children say that they feel listened to and can trust staff. Children have access to a therapist, which further supports their emotional well-being and development.

Children's complaints are taken seriously. Staff and managers take prompt action if children complain. There are also regular house meetings where children share their views.

There is a strong ethos of working 'with' the children, rather than 'doing to'. This results in the children feeling valued and increases their sense of security and well-being. The staff team works hard to support each child's individual identity, taking account of their cultural and diversity needs.

Staff provide individualised care and have a good understanding of children's progress. Staff are committed to the children; they celebrate their achievements and important milestones. For example, one child celebrated their birthday with their friends at a restaurant of their choice.

Staff work hard to support children to access education. One child who had not attended school before living at this home now has 100% school attendance and is preparing to take their GCSE exams. If children are not attending formal education, alternative arrangements such as home tutoring are in place.

Children have comfortable bedrooms that they can personalise, and the home is decorated to a good standard. However, the home's large back garden could be better used and more child-friendly. The area to the side of the home also needs some garden maintenance.

Staff support children to learn the necessary skills to care for themselves, including cooking and doing their own laundry.

Staff encourage and guide children to make healthy and safer choices, through regular key-work sessions. Key-work sessions focus on incidents of concern, as well as independence and self-care skills. The sessions are child-centred and topics are sensitively discussed.

Feedback from external professionals is positive. One child's independent reviewing officer said, 'The progress they have made whilst in the home has been impressive and a real pleasure to have observed.'

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

Children say that they feel safe living at this home. Children's personalised behaviour management plans support staff to understand triggers for certain behaviours. Plans are effective and give staff strategies to manage situations and prevent escalation. Staff respond to children positively and with empathy. They de-escalate situations through their interventions, for example, supporting a child who had become upset and unable to control their emotions.

Staff are trained appropriately in behaviour management de-escalation techniques. Staff and managers promptly report any changes of behaviour to the child's professional network. This ensures that there is an agreed response to safeguard children and maintain consistency of care.

Incidents are managed well. Key-work sessions and restorative discussions are held with children to address incidents of concern. These are non-judgemental, open conversations that enable children and staff to reflect on incidents and identify strategies that will prevent further incidents occurring in the future.

Staff are alert to safeguarding risk and show a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and processes. Allegations against staff are taken seriously and appropriate referrals are made promptly to the local authority designated officer. However, the recording and review of allegations needs to be improved.

If children go missing from home, staff are proactive and stay in contact with them. Staff follow the agreed missing-from-home protocol, however, children's individual plans are not all on their files. Staff are keen to understand through discussion with the children the reasons behind their absences. This has resulted in fewer missing-from-home episodes.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Staff feel well supported. Leaders and managers ensure that staff understand their roles and responsibilities to enable them to provide a good standard of care to children. Team meetings and supervision provide staff with opportunities to discuss children's progress, reflect on their practice and help to identify training needs. However, one member of staff has not had formal supervision for two months and this needed to be scheduled.

The management team's open-door policy makes staff feel that managers are responsive, and they feel valued. One staff member said of the registered manager, 'I'm not sure if she realises this, but she makes the home a safe space, not just for the children but for her staff too.'

Leaders and managers welcome the external scrutiny of the independent person. This is positively supporting the management team to develop systems and assess

the quality of care provided to children. Leaders and managers take effective action to identify where improvement is required.

The registered manager works hard in advocating for the children in her care. She works collaboratively with children's professional networks and communicates any issues or concerns promptly. The registered manager ensures that children's local authority plans align with their care plans and will effectively challenge if arrangements made by the local authority impact negatively on children.

The registered manager has a good admissions process for the home. However, suitability assessments could be improved. Assessments could expand on the existing matching tool on the children's records to include the skill set of staff, as well as the individual needs of the children.

The registered manager is committed to providing a reflective, open and learning team culture. There are plans for further specialised therapeutic training for staff. Staff are offered appropriate training. However, the staff training matrix needs to be updated to include recent training attended and this should be reflected in the workforce development plan. The workforce development plan, known as the learning and development plan, needs to include further detail, including the staffing structure and timescales for induction.

Leaders and managers share an ambitious vision for the home and show enthusiasm and commitment to giving children safe care. One professional said the home has gone the 'extra mile' for the child that they work with and that living at the home has been an 'excellent experience for them'.

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 procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular— provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response; describe the measures which may be necessary to protect children following an allegation of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 34 (2)(d)(e)) Specifically, this relates to ensuring that records of allegations are detailed and accessible.	30 April 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should have a workforce strategy that records the training and continuing professional development needs and achievements of those employed in the home. The plan should include timescales for achieving induction, mandatory qualifications and training, plus commitments to continuing professional development and the procedures for supervision. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 10.9)
- The registered person should ensure that the training matrix in the workforce development plan is updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should have systems in place so that all staff receive supervision which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should have individual missing from home plans for children that take into account the views of appropriate local services and comply with police and local authority protocols. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.24)

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied after their assessment that the staff can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The registered person should seek as far as possible to maintain a homely environment, including maintaining the garden areas. ('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: 2735311

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Youthworx London Limited

Responsible individual: Jessie Rowland

Registered manager: Eve Odogwu

Inspector

Amanda Burrows, Social Care Inspector

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