

2738398

Registered provider: Northridge Care Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is managed by a private provider and provides care for up to three children who may have learning disabilities and social and emotional difficulties.

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

The manager has dual registration for this home and another home. They were registered for this home in September 2023.

This was the home's first inspection since registration in September 2023.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 February 2024

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 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: requires improvement to be good

Both children living at the home moved in recently. They have started to develop positive relationships with the manager and staff team. Staff listen to them and spend time with them. Children are aware of who will be caring for them each day as photos of the members of staff who will be on duty are on display. This provides stability and consistency of care for children.

Children are provided with opportunities to participate in activities outside their home, such as spa days, movie nights and going ice skating. Significant events for each child are celebrated and moments captured so that children are provided with a lasting record of their experiences. This is important for children and will allow them to understand their journey to adulthood.

One child was attending school full time, however, they have recently been excluded. The manager has liaised with school so that alternative activities, such as horse riding, to meet the child's needs are in place. Another child has access to online learning sessions, however, has not accessed this since coming to the home. There has been insufficient challenge by the home to education services and the placing authority, meaning that the child does not have opportunities to learn and is not making progress.

The manager has challenged the local authority when concerns have been raised about the future plan for one child. However, this has not been escalated and, as a result, the child is unclear about the timing and plan for them when leaving care. The manager has recently drawn up an independence plan. This delay means there have been missed opportunities to prepare the child for their move to independence.

Care planning for one child moving into the home was not thorough. The child did not have an up-to-date local authority placement or care plan for several weeks. The manager had not put in place their own plan to reflect the child's needs. This means that staff were not fully aware of the child's risks and needs when they moved into the home. Furthermore, there was a lack of challenge to the local authority when statutory visits had not been completed. This does not allow children the opportunity to discuss their plans or ensure they are safe.

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

Risk assessments for each child are individualised and set out strategies for staff to use to support children to understand how they can be safe. However, they are not reviewed or updated following serious incidents or emerging concerns. Ineffective monitoring and a lack of response to these incidents and concerns mean that children continue to potentially be at risk.

Incidents of self-harm are recorded. However, records lack sufficient detail and do not include preventative measures used by staff in accordance with the child's risk assessment. There is no evidence of the manager being professionally curious about what actions staff have taken to manage the incident. Staff and children are not always provided with an opportunity to discuss the incident afterwards. This is a missed opportunity for children and staff to learn from incidents and for staff to develop and strengthen their practice.

Discussions with children take place in planned and ad hoc ways. Children have discussed their feelings and past experiences in addition to any current issues they have. However, managers and staff have not used these discussions as an opportunity to consider what further support the children need.

Children do not go missing from the home. Managers have ensured that children have plans in place, should they go missing from the home. Children's plans include details of people they know. Staff have developed positive relationships with children's families and known friends.

Safer recruitment processes are in place. This means that when staff come to work at the home, all safeguarding checks have been completed to ensure their suitability to work with children.

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

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced. The staff team is new to the home and individual staff are in their probation period. The team has remained consistent and one new senior member of staff has been recruited. New staff have completed a full induction and training programme. They have also been provided with the opportunity to shadow more experienced members of staff.

Staff said that they feel supported by the manager, who is developing the team. They enjoy working at the home and are committed to ensuring that children receive the best possible care.

The manager's oversight of practice in the home remains inconsistent. Although the manager has an audit process in place to review incidents, risk assessments have not been updated to reflect changes and emerging risks. This is a missed opportunity to identify areas for improvement.

Staff practice in relation to the recording of incidents and any preventative measures taken are not detailed. This does not provide an opportunity to consider and review the quality of care provided.

Team meetings and supervision take place regularly and are well attended. The provider's therapist attends the team meetings, which are used as an opportunity for

staff to discuss their understanding of supporting children and how this can be developed to support children's experiences.

Children are encouraged to personalise communal areas and their own bedrooms. However, damage to a child's bedroom has not been repaired in a timely manner. This does not support children to feel valued.

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 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; 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)(i)(viii)) Specifically, children should have an education provision and be encouraged to attend. Children should be supported to be ready to engage in education and be provided with suitable structured activities to support learning opportunities.	6 March 2024
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;	6 March 2024

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 are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(v)(vi)(vii)) Specifically, that staff understand the risks for children and record each incident accurately, including any actions leading up to and following the incident. This applies to all significant events, including when children have self-harmed.	
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; 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)(f)(h)) Specifically, that the manager has systems in place to ensure the effective oversight of all aspects of children's care.	6 March 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming and supportive and meets children's basic day-to-day needs. In particular, damage to the property should be repaired in a timely manner, specifically the damage to children's bedroom walls. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should challenge (under regulation 5(c)) any placing authority who asks them to accept a child in the absence of a complete and current relevant plan, as the expectation that a placement of a child without the necessary information would go ahead (in circumstances other than an emergency) is inadequate in relation to their role. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.5)

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: 2738398

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Northridge Care Group Limited

Registered provider address: Richard House, 9 Winckley Square, Preston,
Lancashire PR1 3HP

Responsible individual: Michelle Donaghey

Registered manager: Kathryn Forshaw

Inspector

Nicola Forrester, Social Care Inspector

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