

2739597

Registered provider: Guidance Care Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and operated by a private provider. It offers care for up to two children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

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

The manager has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 3 September 2024

Date of last inspection: 12 June 2024

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be 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:

- Staff have not taken suitable action when children are missing from the home.
- Children's support plans do not provide staff with clear guidance and strategies to use.
- Children's support plans do not include individualised information.
- Staff do not receive supervision.
- Poor staff performance is not challenged or reflected on.
- Management oversight of the home is not effective.

There have been shortfalls in staff responses when children have gone missing from the home. Staff do not actively search areas or addresses where the child is known to visit. Ineffective oversight from the manager has meant that staff practice is not reviewed, and lessons learned are not identified following missing-from-home-episodes.

There is an unstable and inconsistent workforce due to difficulties with recruitment and retention. Staff from another home in the organisation are used to cover shortfalls. This means that not all staff working with the children know them well and it does not provide continuity of care for children. The manager and deputy manager have been covering staff shortages, which has meant that their time is spent away from their management responsibilities.

Risk assessments and positive behaviour support plans are in place. However, these do not provide staff with clear guidance or strategies to use, and they do not include strategies which are individual to the child. This means that staff are not prepared to support and manage challenging situations, and practice is ineffective and inconsistent.

There has been one complaint from a child against a staff member. The manager has taken suitable and appropriate action and notified all relevant professionals while ensuring that the child's welfare remained a priority throughout the investigation. Children said that they feel listened to and are confident to make complaints if they are unhappy.

Staff support children to spend time with their friends and family. This ensures that they can maintain relationships which are important to them and develop a sense of their own identity.

Staff support children to attend routine health appointments. Staff work with health professionals to ensure that the children have access to additional health and well-being support if needed, such as child and adolescent mental health services. One child who moved in more recently has been registered with the necessary local healthcare providers.

The manager is supported by a deputy manager. The manager has oversight of incidents and reports. However, she does not always identify areas of poor practice. This means that poor practice is not challenged or changed.

Staff are not receiving regular practice-related supervision. In addition, staff do not always have the opportunity to reflect on incidents and significant events. This means that poor practice is not challenged, which places children at risk of harm. This is a missed opportunity for staff to learn from incidents, improve their practice, and drive improvements in the quality of care provided to the children.

Leaders and the manager notify Ofsted of significant events which occur at the home. However, these notifications are not always sent in a timely manner. This affects external monitoring of children's safety and welfare.

The requirement raised under Regulation 45 at the last inspection was not reviewed during this inspection and remains in place.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/06/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
27/02/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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 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; 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; 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; that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(e)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that children's support plans and/or risk assessments include clear guidance and strategies for staff to follow and information that is specific to the child's needs.	30 September 2024

In addition, the registered person must ensure that there are clear protocols in place so that staff can take appropriate action to find and return children home if they go missing from care.	
*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 work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and 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)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(ii)(h)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff receive regular practice-related supervision. Managers and	30 September 2024

staff must reflect on any significant events to identify any learning. The registered person must have systems in place to identify and address poor practice. In addition, the registered person must ensure that there is a stable and consistent workforce to provide continuity of care for the children.	
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; a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. A notification made under this regulation— must include details of— the matter; the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter; must be made or confirmed in writing. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e) (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))	9 September 2024

The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children (“a quality of care review”) at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(c)) This requirement is restated.	30 September 2024
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*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2739597

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Guidance Care Limited

Registered provider address: Guidance Care Limited, Unit 8, Sovereign Court, Wyrefields, Poulton Industrial Estate, Poulton-le-Fylde FY6 8JX

Responsible individual: Jordan Thomas

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Katie Tomlinson, Social Care Inspector

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