

2739597

Registered provider: Guidance Care

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The privately owned home provides care for up to two children with social and emotional difficulties.

The home and manager registered with Ofsted in September 2023.

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

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 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

Children benefit from living in a spacious and warm home. The home is well presented and well decorated and feels like a family home. Children are supported to personalise their bedrooms to their own taste.

Children have positive relationships with the staff who care for them. One child engages in some positive key-work sessions to discuss topics relating to their life. However, due to the lack of routines in the home, this is not consistent for all children. This means that children are not always receiving the support they need to make progress in line with their care plans.

Staff develop individualised care plans for each child. However, they do not have access to up-to-date care plans for all children. This compromises the quality of the individualised care plans and children's progress and experiences.

Staff do not consistently help children to engage in education. Children who are not attending school are not always provided with a daily structure of educational activities to support informal learning. This prevents the children from reaching their full potential.

Children do not always have healthy and consistent routines in place. Staff say that they try to promote positive routines, but accept that children stay up late at night, which results in them often spending large parts of the following day in bed. This impacts on children's education and other social opportunities.

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

Leaders and managers report serious incidents to Ofsted so that the regulator has oversight of the action taken by staff to keep children safe. However, there has been a delay in managers notifying Ofsted of some incidents. This compromises the regulator's oversight of the home and its safeguarding practice.

Children rarely go missing from home. Staff keep children safe by following their individualised missing-from-home plans. This helps staff to act quickly and prevent incidents from occurring. There has been a significant reduction in one child's missing-from-home episodes since moving to the home.

Children say that they feel safe. They can identify trusted adults who they can talk to about their worries. There are positive relationships between the staff and the children. One child said, 'I love living here and love my room. It's great.'

Children are given consequences and incentives to help manage their behaviour. However, these are not always achievable or effective. For example, incentives to go to school or wake up early are used, when it is difficult for children to achieve these. This potentially reduces children's motivation to follow the rules and boundaries in place. Management oversight of the effectiveness of consequences and incentives is poor.

A number of the children who have lived at the home have struggled to manage their behaviours. Staff do not use effective strategies to help manage and reduce children's challenging behaviour. This has led to a deterioration in some children's behaviours. Two children have been involved in significant criminal behaviours, including burglary, damage to neighbouring properties and assaults on staff. This has resulted in children being given notice to leave the home. These transitions have not been positive.

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

The registered manager has had an extended period away from work. During this period, the responsible individual has been in day-to-day charge of the home. Ofsted was not informed of the manager's unplanned absence. This meant that there was a gap in the regulator's oversight of the management arrangements for the home.

Leaders and managers accept that, as a result of management changes and having a relatively new staff team, there have been shortfalls in the overall management of the home. In particular, staff development has not progressed. However, it is positive that the management team is reflective and has identified areas for development.

Staff say that they feel supported in their roles. They attend regular supervision meetings with their managers. Staff also attend regular team meetings where they are able to share their knowledge and discuss the needs of the children in a reflective way.

There are gaps in the manager's overall monitoring and review systems. This does not support the manager to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided to children. For example, the manager has not reviewed children's plans to ensure that they are up to date and include all relevant information. In addition, the manager and staff have not taken sufficient action to obtain local authority plans for children, to ensure that they are working to the correct and current plans.

Leaders and managers do not always consider potential risks when matching children. While attempts have been made to mitigate the risk of some children's behaviours impacting on other children, this has not always been effective. For example, children have been involved in joint criminal activity, which has led to one child being placed in custody. As a result, children's experiences have not always been positive.

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 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. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that each child's statutory plans are available for staff to follow. Also, to ensure that children have a positive planned experience when moving on from the home and that when new children move into the home, the needs of all children are considered.	28 March 2024
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set	28 March 2024

out in the child's relevant plans;

help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;

encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding;

help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;

communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding;

help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful;

help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship;

strive to gain each child's respect and trust;

understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children;

are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same;

de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children;

understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and

have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them.

(Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c)

(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)(xi)(xii)(xiii))

In particular, the registered person must ensure that children's behavioural needs are supported in an effective and consistent manner, any behavioural approaches are embedded across the team and children are supported to manage their own behaviours.	
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record	28 March 2024

confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)(iv))	
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; 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 each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; maintain regular contact with each child’s education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child’s education and training and to maximise the child’s achievement; raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child’s education or training provider and the child’s placing authority; 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;	28 March 2024

help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans; and that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff help children to engage in formal or informal education as part of a daily structured routine and in accordance with their relevant plans.	
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. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	28 March 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that when the person who is in day-to-day charge of the home proposes to be absent from the home for a continuous period of 28 days or more, they notify Ofsted in writing (regulation 48). ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 60, paragraph 12.5)

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: 2739597

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Guidance Care

Registered provider address: Unit 8 Sovereign Court, Wyrefields, Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire FY6 8JX

Responsible individual: Jordan Thomas

Registered manager: Darren Johnson

Inspector

James Meeks, Social Care Inspector

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