

2745837

Registered provider: Forevermore Care Group Limited T/A Estuary Care

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private provider. It provides care for up to four children with learning difficulties. There were two children living in the home at the time of the inspection. The manager registered with Ofsted in February 2024.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 January 2025

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: 26 September 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

The home had its first full inspection on 26 September 2024, and following a quality assurance review, the judgement was changed from requires improvement to be good to inadequate in all areas. A case review was held on 10 October where requirements in the following regulations were agreed: regulation 12, the protection of children standard, regulation 13, the leadership and management standard, regulation 25, fire precautions, regulation 11, the positive relationships standard, regulation 32, the fitness of workers standard and regulation 44, independent person: visits and reports standard.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/09/2024	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

There have not been any children move in or out of the home since the last inspection. This has allowed the staff to strengthen relationships with the children and support them to make some progress.

One child attends education. However, their attendance has been affected by issues with transport. The manager has worked well with the local authority and there is now an agreed action plan in place, which includes staff at the home supporting the child to and from school.

For another child, an education placement has been identified. However, for an interim period, the child has had a tutor. This has been successful, and the child has benefited from this. Staff provide children with structured activities during periods when they are not attending education.

Children have different ways of communicating, which the staff understand. As a result, the children can communicate their basic needs, wishes and feelings. However, children are not encouraged to feed back on their experiences of living at the home. This is a missed opportunity for the manager to review and develop the quality of the care that the children receive. Additionally, children are not supported to contribute to their care plans.

Staff support children to attend medical appointments. Children receive support to develop their skills to manage their personal care and are now also enjoying a healthy and varied diet. However, it remains unclear how managers are reviewing and monitoring children's targets or how children's progress is measured as records lack sufficient detail.

Children enjoy both indoor and community activities with the staff. These include baking, sensory play, visiting parks, trampolining and shopping. The staff have worked well to reduce restrictions on children during these times, including reducing the use of a buggy and the numbers of staff required.

Children enjoy regular time with their families, and friendships are also encouraged by the staff. This ensures that children spend time with those that are important to them.

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

Although progress has been made since the last inspection, the children do not receive a good level of help and protection.

The children can often experience times of high anxiety that can result in harm to themselves, others and the environment. However, the staff now ensure that they obtain medical advice for children who have banged their head, and there is now clear guidance in place for the staff to follow. Additionally, the staff have a better understanding of children's needs and support children to regulate their behaviours.

The use of restrictive physical intervention is rare. The staff make use of de-escalation techniques and keeping safe interventions. However, there are shortfalls in the recording and oversight of restraint practices. The duration of physical interventions is unclear, and the manager has recorded interventions that they have not been involved in. This does not ensure that records are factually accurate. When the manager has been involved in a physical intervention, there has been no independent oversight. This is a missed opportunity to demonstrate that practice is appropriate and safe.

The environment is not of a good standard, and there are holes in the walls throughout the home that children have made through head banging or throwing items at them. It is recognised by the manager and the responsible individual that the walls are of poor quality and that they are easily damaged. The manager does make a request for repairs to be actioned. However, there has been a delay in action being taken.

There is damage to several of the fire doors, and despite weekly checks being recorded as conducted, the damage to doors has not been identified and immediate action has not been taken to rectify this safety concern.

Children do not have locks on their bedroom doors. This was a requirement made at the last inspection to ensure that children can have privacy. However, this has not been actioned. Additionally, there are locks on the conservatory doors that impact on children's ability to freely enter the garden area.

Both children take several different medications. For one child, one of these medications has been stopped, which is a positive step. However, there have been several medication errors since the last inspection. When the errors have been identified, the manager has taken appropriate action, including seeking medical advice and making appropriate referrals to the local authority designated officer. However, this does not demonstrate that appropriate processes are in place to ensure that medication is safely administered.

The manager now ensures that safer recruitment processes are followed, which reduces the chances of unsuitable people working with the children.

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

The manager is suitably experienced and qualified, and she is supported by a deputy manager. Following the last inspection, the managers assessed the competencies of each staff member. These competencies are detailed and identify the individual strengths and areas of development for all staff. This is used to develop their practice.

The manager has taken action to meet some of the requirements and recommendations made following the last inspection. However, a number of these have been restated.

The manager has introduced new monthly monitoring systems. However, there are gaps in her day-to-day oversight of the home. For example, she was not able to identify when damage had been caused to the walls or the impact this has on children. Additionally, shortfalls in children's records and the language used by staff have not been identified by the manager as inappropriate.

New staff receive support during their induction, and they confirm that they have received regular supervision. The manager is quick to address any conflict in the team so that this does not impact on the children.

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 the premises used and for the purposed of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the children's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(d)) This relates specifically to the manager ensuring that damage caused to walls and doors is repaired and that they are painted, to prevent a hazard to the children living at the accommodation. This further relates to the manager ensuring that fire doors are maintained.	21 February 2025
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— develop positive relationships with them; engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— help each child to express their views wishes and feelings; regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care;	21 February 2025

help each child to prepare for any review of the child's relevant plans and to make the child's views, wishes and feelings known for the purposes of that review. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(iv)(vi)) This relates specifically to the recording of the voice of the child in case records to outline their life experience. Additionally, this relates to ensuring that children's views on the quality of care they receive are captured.	
The registered person must ensure that— the privacy of children is appropriately protected; children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) This relates specifically to children being able to lock their bedroom doors to ensure their privacy and that locks on the patio doors are replaced with thumb locks to enable children free access to the garden.	21 February 2025
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 staff—	21 February 2025

provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(iv)(vi)) This relates specifically to the registered manager ensuring that children's progress is recorded in a way that shows progression and that children are supported to achieve this through regular and consistent support.	
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")—	21 February 2025

has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate;

within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record 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))

This relates specifically to incidents involving the registered manager having independent oversight and that durations of any interventions are clearly recorded.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 2745837

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Forevermore Care Group Limited T/A Estuary Care

Registered provider address: Riverside Mill, Mountbatten Way, Congleton,
Cheshire CW12 1DY

Responsible individual: Neil Johnstone

Registered manager: Mandy Richards

Inspectors

Kerri Lynch, Social Care Inspector
Jon Dutton, Social Care Inspector

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