

2759542

Registered provider: Accord Care Homes 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 three children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

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

The manager has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 7 November 2024

Date of last inspection: 31 July 2024

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspectors evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have 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 widespread concerns in relation to the care and protection of children at this assurance inspection:

- Leaders and managers do not ensure that there is sufficient oversight of staff practice to keep children safe.
- Children's plans do not reflect the level of risk that they experience and do not include clear steps for staff to follow to keep children safe.
- Leaders and managers do not ensure that staff have the skills and training to de-escalate children's behaviours effectively.
- Leaders and managers do not ensure that staff complete all relevant training before they provide care for children.
- Leaders and managers have not considered the impact children's behaviour has on the other children living in the home.
- Leaders and managers do not ensure that children live in a well-maintained and homely environment that is free of hazards.

At the time of this inspection, three children were living in the home. The children's safety, progress and experiences have been compromised by ineffective management oversight and poor safeguarding practice.

Since the last inspection, several staff have left the organisation. Leaders and managers have recruited new staff; however, the new staff have not experienced an effective induction to the home or completed the necessary training to keep children safe. This has impacted significantly on children's experiences and safety.

Behaviour management in the home is not effective. Staff say that they are fearful of one child, and this has impacted on their ability to maintain consistent boundaries in the home. The police have been contacted on several occasions to manage children's behaviour. This does not demonstrate to children that staff are able to keep them safe.

Not all staff who have held children have been appropriately trained. Consequently, physical intervention practice is not always effective and does not safely support children. Records are not always detailed, as required by regulation, and debriefs have not consistently been carried out with staff and children. Children have not had the opportunity to speak with someone independent after being held by the manager. These are missed opportunities to safeguard children, seek their views about physical intervention and for staff to reflect and learn from incidents.

Leaders and managers do not challenge professionals or advocate in the best interests of the children to ensure that they are safeguarded. Leaders and managers failed to take action when a child in the home told them they were scared and

increased anxiety-related behaviours were observed. This does not demonstrate child-centred practice.

The safety of children in the home has been impacted by shortfalls in management oversight. Leaders and managers have not ensured that the team understands the impact of children's individual risks and how to keep them safe. There have been incidents of children being unsafe in the car. Leaders and managers have not taken action to ensure that incidents are not repeated. Consequently, children have continued to be placed at risk.

Risk and behaviour support plans lack detail and do not contain all current risks and vulnerabilities for children. Risks that are identified, such as substance misuse, do not include specific strategies to support the staff to keep children safe.

There have been occasions when children have been missing from this home. When incidents have occurred, staff have responded in line with children's plans. However, return home interviews have not taken place, and this has not been escalated with children's placing authorities. This is a missed opportunity to seek the children's views and to promote their welfare.

The home is not a well-maintained space for children. There is a significant amount of damage, including several health and safety hazards, such as broken light switches, exposed wiring and a broken television. This limits opportunities for children to feel valued and to develop a sense of belonging in the home.

Leaders and managers have not taken sufficient action to meet the requirements made at the last inspection. Therefore, these have been restated. Following this inspection, a case review was held due to the serious concerns identified and the decision was made to issue a compliance notice under Regulation 12 (the protection of children standard) and a notice restricting accommodation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/07/2024	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; 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; 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 premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished, and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(b)(d)) Leaders and managers must ensure that children's risks and vulnerabilities are detailed in their risk plans and that their plans include clear guidance for staff to follow to keep children safe. Leaders and managers must ensure that staff follow children's individual risk plans and that children are provided	12 November 2024

with the opportunity to engage in return home interviews following episodes of being missing from home. Leaders and managers must ensure that staff have attended all relevant training and have the skills and experience to understand their responsibilities to safeguard and support children. Leaders and managers must ensure that the home is maintained to a high standard and that all damages and health and safety concerns are addressed without delay.	
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— ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; 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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(e)(f)(h)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that staff work as a team and provide consistent boundaries and expectations for the children, use effective monitoring systems to recognise any shortfalls in practice, and respond swiftly to address the shortfalls.	19 December 2024
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—	19 December 2024

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 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))	
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child’s placing authority effectively in the child’s care, in accordance with the child’s relevant plans; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority’s or a relevant person’s performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child’s needs are met in accordance with the child’s relevant plans; and	19 December 2024

seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5 (a)(c)(d)) Specifically, leaders and managers must advocate for children and challenge the decisions made by professionals if they are not in children's best interests.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that they consider whether staff can meet children's needs before they move into the home.	19 December 2024

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2759542

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Accord Care Homes Limited

Registered provider address: 24 Greek Street, Stockport SK3 8AB

Responsible individual: Karen Buckley

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Kelly McCurdy, Social Care Inspector
Kimberley Feeley, Social Care Inspector

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