

2763401

Registered provider: Cornerways Homes

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private organisation. It provides care for up to two children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2023.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 April 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

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: good

Since the home registered with Ofsted in November 2023, three children have moved into the home and two children have moved on from the home. At the time of this inspection, one child was living at the home.

Children's moves into the home were well planned. They met the staff and visited the home before moving in. Two children have moved on from the home. For safety reasons beyond the manager's control, these moves could not be planned for. These moves have both been managed sensitively so that children can have closure and positive endings.

The home is cosy, well decorated and homely. There are several communal rooms to relax in. The child's bedroom is personalised. The child is proud of the garden and grows rhubarb. Overall, the child benefits from living in a pleasant and well-kept home.

The child has recently moved into the home. The child said that he is settling in well and is building trusting relationships with staff. The child enjoys quality time with the staff. The child is humorous and playful with staff. Staff work hard to build positive relationships with the child, which encourages the child to be open.

The child has been out of education for a long length of time. The manager is liaising with the headteacher of the virtual school to find an appropriate provision. The social worker is impressed with the manager. Staff are home-schooling the child and making it enjoyable. They use a range of educational resources. The child is engaging with education and takes pride in his work.

The child's family are happy with the care provided by the staff. They have confidence in the staff. Time with family is encouraged. One family member said, 'I cannot believe the difference in him within a week, he is laughing, looks well and back to his old self.'

The child takes part in a range of activities. He has a gym membership and enjoys bicycle rides and swimming. The child is also looking into joining a kick boxing club with his key worker. Overall, staff provide enjoyable and enriching experiences.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

The manager and staff have acted to help keep children safe. Despite this, at times, children have been exposed to risky situations. The staff are confident and well equipped to manage safeguarding incidents. The staff understand when police support is needed to help keep a child safe. Social workers and parents are confident in staff's ability to safeguard children.

There have been several allegations about the staff. The manager ensures that allegations made by children are investigated promptly and that children are kept safe.

The manager informs relevant professionals about allegations, which provides a transparent approach.

Physical intervention has been used on a few occasions. These interventions were appropriate, necessary and proportionate. The manager debriefs staff following incidents. Staff listen to the child's views on restraint and explore outlets for the child to express their feelings and emotions.

There have been some missing-from-home incidents. Staff have managed these well. They follow children when they leave and welcome them when they return. Children are offered independent return home interviews.

Staff receive appropriate safeguarding training. They understand internal whistle-blowing procedures. One member of staff did not know the options for whistle-blowing externally. This reduces the intended safeguard of them being able to raise concerns outside the home.

The manager compiles a risk assessment before children move into the home. The assessment includes an evaluation of the known risks, staff experience and consultation with the child and professionals. However, the assessment fails to include how the child's needs will be met.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is experienced and has enrolled on the appropriate level 5 diploma. He is also partway through a leadership and management coaching qualification. The manager is supported by an experienced responsible individual and a director.

Staff said that the managers are very knowledgeable and approachable. The staff have regular supervision sessions. One staff member said that they have had excellent support from managers following a difficult incident. Being well supported helps to motivate the staff to deliver good care. Overall, the child benefits from a consistent and stable staff team.

Three social workers and a team manager said that they are impressed with the care provided to children. The manager has regular multi-agency meetings to ensure that children receive the best possible care.

A social work team leader said, 'This has been the best experience of working with a residential care home that I have ever had. The manager always has the child's best interests at the heart of every decision.'

The independent person's reports are of good quality and include feedback from children, parents and professionals. The independent person makes appropriate recommendations that help the manager to improve the quality of care.

Staff receive high-quality face-to-face training. Staff and the manager benefit from input from a therapist to help them understand the children's past trauma. The staff either have an appropriate level 3 diploma or are working towards this, within agreed timescales. Staff have a good knowledge of how to meet the children's needs and are motivated to provide good care.

The manager did not receive all known information about the behaviours and needs of one child before they moved into the home. This meant that there was not enough consideration given to how the child's needs could be managed. The managers challenged the referring local authority. The feedback was used by the local authority to better inform their referral process.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all staff are clear on how to whistle-blow and report a safeguarding concern externally. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.9)
- The registered person should ensure that they only accept placements for children when they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs. In particular, ensure that when making a decision to offer care to a child, there is a clear rationale of how the child's needs can be met. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

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: 2763401

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cornerways Homes

Registered provider address: The Work Station, 6 St Peters Street, St Albans AL1 3LF

Responsible individual: Melissa Mathews

Registered manager: Vincent Kimber

Inspector

Amy Miles, Social Care Inspector

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