

2772524

Registered provider: Willows (Devon) Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is part of a small organisation and is registered to provide care for up to three children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 8 January 2024.

Three children were living at the home at the time of this inspection.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 May 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
---	-------------

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
---	------

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: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This is the first inspection of a new home. The home is beautifully presented and spacious, with photos and collages of the children on display to show they live here. The girls' bedrooms are personalised to them. One child recently damaged their bedroom, and the provider quickly actioned repairs.

Children have built strong relationships with the staff team. All three of the children spoke about how 'lovely' some of the staff are. When the manager arrived at the start of the inspection, two of the children ran to hug her and tell her about their recent holiday.

Progress for the children is mixed. Recent disruption in the home has meant that staff have had to spend more time with one child. This has meant that the other children have not been able to do all the activities they usually would. All the children are attending school, college, or supported education regularly. For two of the children, who were not attending at all before coming here, this is significant progress.

Children take part in activities, such as horse-riding, going to the beach, and having sleepovers with friends. The children understand that they can have additional treats, such as having their nails or hair done, as an incentive if they complete agreed tasks, such as keeping their room clean. Two of the children enjoyed a recent caravan holiday and spoke excitedly about this.

Children take turns to cook meals on a regular basis, and staff and children come together to eat evening meals. This helps to promote a sense of family and helps the children to develop independence. Plans relating to snacks are not clear and some snacks are locked away, which does not support the children to learn boundaries or healthy eating habits.

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

When incidents happen, staff respond quickly to ensure that children are safe. Records are detailed, with appropriate agencies being informed quickly. Staff know what to do when children go missing and follow these processes. They search for children and constantly try to keep in touch with them by phone or text.

The steps to take to ensure children's safety are not always clear. For example, it is not clear at what point police should be called, and this does not enable the team to provide consistent care. Details in children's plans are vague and do not clarify what strategies staff are to use. The language used in plans does not always describe the behaviour, which does not help staff to understand what is expected of them.

There has been one incident of restraint. This was used to keep the child and staff safe. The written record of this was detailed. Conversations took place with the staff afterwards to ensure that lessons were learned. Attempts to discuss the incident with the child took place to try to prevent this happening again.

Children's health needs are met. One child has been able to attend their medical review after not previously engaging with this. Vaping has been a concern for the children and plans lack a robust approach to challenging this. Support for children's sexual health is also lacking.

Conversations with children about risky behaviours take place. Children say that they know why staff worry about them. One child said that this was the safest place that she had lived. A room search was carried out on one occasion. This was approached sensitively and was necessary to keep the child safe.

When an allegation was made against staff, the concerns were taken seriously and reported appropriately. An internal investigation was also completed and the outcomes were shared with the child. Work took place with the child around the seriousness of the allegations, and learning was identified for the team. There was a slight delay in arranging this training, which does not help to improve practice.

Processes for recruiting employed staff are robust and thorough. Recent events have meant that agency staff are being used for the first time. Recruitment processes in respect of these staff lack scrutiny which leaves children vulnerable.

Planning for when children move into the home is of a good standard. Information is shared beforehand between the manager and social workers. Staff and the children already living at the home are spoken to about the new person in advance so that their views can also be considered.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Staff speak of feeling supported and say that managers are available to them. Many of the staff team have worked together previously at another home and speak highly of the support they receive from each other. There is a thorough induction process in place and staff speak of this positively.

The manager has systems in place to monitor care and review incidents. Learning from incidents and the need for training is identified. However, organising this training has been slow. The manager identified risks for one child before they joined the home; however, no specific training was arranged until after an incident occurred.

Children's records benefit from management review. Reflection on incidents helps the team to understand the lessons learned and how to prevent the incident happening again. There is a lack of consistent understanding of individual children's care among the staff team. The language used in records is unclear at times, and this does not help the staff to provide the best possible care to the children.

Communication with wider professionals is good. Social workers and educational professionals report that they receive information appropriately and are informed of incidents quickly.

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, 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 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)) In particular, ensure that all staff provide consistent care for each child.	7 June 2024
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that	31 May 2024

individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that safe recruitment processes are in place regarding temporary staff.	
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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii)) In particular, certain foods should not be locked away unless there is an assessed risk.	31 May 2024
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and	31 May 2024

notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))	
---	--

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are offered advice, support and guidance on health and well-being to enhance and supplement that provided by their school. In particular, conversations about vaping and sexual health should regularly take place with children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.18).
- The registered person should support staff to be ambitious for every child and to gain skills and experience that enable them to actively support each child to achieve their potential. In particular, ensure that relevant training is sought when particular needs are identified for a child. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.5).

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: 2772524

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Willows (Devon) Ltd

Registered provider address: Old Farm House, Gussage St. Michael, Wimborne BH21 5JE

Responsible individual: Carolyn Coombes

Registered manager: Jodi-Marie Barton

Inspector

Nickie Doney, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024