

2780230

Registered provider: Sterling Supported Living LTD

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private company that provides care for up to one child. The home cares for children who may have emotional and social difficulties or learning disabilities.

The home is led by an experienced registered manager.

There was one child living in the home at the time of the inspection

Inspection dates: 24 to 25 September 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	inadequate
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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 applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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Inspection judgements

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

The home was registered 14 June 2024. This inspection was completed as a result of arising concerns. Shortfalls in safeguarding practice means that the overall quality of care in this home requires improvement.

The manager has ensured that the child's move into the home was planned well. This involves working closely with social workers, previous carers, and other professionals. The process was led by the child, supporting the child throughout this period of change.

Daily records do not reflect language that cares and lacks emotional warmth. They also lack required detail and information. The child's food intake is not routinely recorded. This is despite worries being recorded in the child's local authority care plan that the child may be skipping meals and limiting their food intake. As a result, managers are not able to assure themselves that the child is eating a healthy balanced diet.

Managers have worked closely with the child and health professionals to reduce barriers to the child attending health appointments. This has included the Looked after nurse and CAHMS making visits to the home, rather than these appointments taking place in a medical setting.

The child is not currently engaging in education. However, this is due to their personal challenges, rather than due to a lack of support from staff. A referral has been made for a tailor-made programme to support the child to study subjects of interest. The responsible individual has also provided additional funding for creative learning within the home, supporting the child to learn in a less structured way. The child has been supported to learn and develop practical independence skills. This increases their self-confidence and self esteem. It also prepares the child in developing practical skills for their eventual move to adult life.

Meaningful discussions take place between staff and the child on a regular basis. The child also participates in weekly house meetings and regular discussions take place with the homes management team to enable the child to express their wishes, views and feelings. Records now show the actions that managers have taken in response to children's views. For example, changes have been made to the staff shift pattern as a result of feedback from the child.

Staff have supported the child to engage in individual key-work sessions. Staff plan these sessions around issues impacting on the child's life. The one-to-one time provides an opportunity for the child to have quality time with staff to explore their feelings and emotions.

The child has a number of pets that she takes responsibility for caring for. This supports the child's emotional development and provides her with an increased sense of responsibility.

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

There has been an increase in the child going missing from care. Staff followed the missing from home procedures implemented by the manager. However, it was identified during the visit, that the manager had not reflected the Local authorities request to report the child missing to the police immediately. As a result, although staff adhered to the procedures in place, there had been a delay in reporting the child missing to the police.

Staff are aware of how to keep the child safe and the need to be vigilant. However, the child's plans and assessments contain inconsistencies, which prevents clear guidance being provided to staff to meet the child's needs. For example, the assessment says the child's phone is to be checked twice daily, within the same assessment it later said the child's phone must be checked once a day. The child's phone contract specifies if the child refuses to hand her phone in, the phone is to be removed. Despite the child not handing her phone in for the required checks to be completed this consequence has not been reinforced. Consequently, the boundaries in place have not been adhered to

The manager has not ensured that staff are appointed inline with safer recruitment checks. Managers have not been professionally curious when completing recruitment checks and have failed to ensure application forms contain a full work history to satisfy themselves that staff are safe to work with children. Consequently, there is a risk that unsuitable staff may be employed at the home to care for children.

The safety plan in place to keep the child safe online was hindered by the manager when she purchased a contract SIM for the child's providing unlimited data. This was purchased without consultation from the team around the child. As a result, this left the safeguarding measures that were in place ineffective. This was challenged by the responsible individual and deputy manager, however was still implemented by the manager.

Staff understand their roles and responsibilities to safeguard children. All staff have undertaken safeguarding training and are confident in reporting concerns and whistleblowing to ensure the child is safeguarded.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The manager was appointed and registered with Ofsted in June 2024, supported by the responsible individual and a deputy manager. However, the quality of management oversight is poor, and monitoring and review systems are ineffective.

Leaders and managers have not addressed several shortfalls in care practice. For example, risk assessments do not include enough detail and direction, boundaries and safety measures have not been adhered to and the child's daily records do not contain all required information. These shortfalls have the capacity to negatively impact on children's experiences.

Leaders and managers have failed to follow safeguarding procedures. Ofsted has not been alerted to serious safeguarding concerns as required by regulation. This impairs the regulator's oversight in reviewing notifications and taking necessary action to ensure the child's safety. The manager has lacked confidence and understanding in safeguarding practice, this has, in some instances, increased potential risks to the child.

The child has made two allegations in recent weeks. The manager has shared this information with the child's social worker and investigated these. However, the manager has failed to inform Ofsted and the Local authority designated officer [LADO]. As a result, safeguarding practice has not been followed in its entirety.

Basic support for staff, such as full staff team meetings, coaching, development and reflective practice, has not been sufficient. Incidents in the home have not been thoroughly evaluated. When incidents have occurred, lessons have not been learnt. This has enabled further incidents to occur of the same nature.

Staff receive weekly supervision throughout their probationary period. One staff member raised a concern about staff practice in their supervision. Although this was investigated by the manager. This has not been treated as whistle blowing. It is positive that staff have been able to report practice that falls below standard. However, it is a concern that the manager has not reported these concerns to professionals.

The manager does not have good oversight of the home and does not have robust quality assurance systems to support this oversight. This means the management of incidents and some aspects of children's care are weak. Not all factors or the potential impact on children's lives are considered, which means not all relevant action is taken in response.

The manager has not led by example and has been a poor role model to the new staff team. She has failed to work in line with the child's plans and assessments which has resulted in confusion and mixed messages within the team. This has further impacted the consistency in the team's approach to supporting the child.

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 health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans; understand and develop skills to promote the child's wellbeing. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(c) (2)(a)(i)(iv)) This specifically relates to ensuring that children are supported to have a healthy sleep routine. It also relates to staff ensuring children eat regular meals and this information is accurately recorded to enable staff to monitor the children's food intake.	28 October 2024
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; help each child to understand how to keep safe;	28 October 2024

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; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. 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; (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)) This is specifically in relation to ensuring the child's risks are understood by staff, that plans, and assessments accurately reflect needs and risks for the child and provide guidance to staff on the action they must take to keep the child safe. It also relates to leaders and managers working with the child's social worker and wider professionals when making decisions that have the potential to increase the child's risks and vulnerabilities. For example, mobile phone and social media usage.	
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;	28 October 2024

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)(a)(b)(c)(e)(f)(h)) This specifically relates to managers embedding monitoring systems in the home to improve the quality of care. This also relates to safety measures being consistently followed and applied by the team.	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. (Regulation 32 (1)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that appropriate action has been taken to complete all required checks for staff being appointed to work at the home. This includes a full employment chronology.	28 October 2024
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))	28 October 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure systems are in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. '(Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, 13.2)'
- The registered person should ensure staff are familiar with the homes 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: 2780230

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sterling Supported Living LTD

Registered provider address: The Old Police Station, Office 1a / 1b Wharncliffe Road, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 5GF

Responsible individual: Harsha Singh

Registered manager: Lucy Rippon

Inspector

Zoey Lee, social care inspector

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