

2786408

Registered provider: City Social Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home has been registered with Ofsted since 13 December 2024. The home provides care for up to three children who may have social and emotional difficulties. The manager registered at the same time as the home.

One child was present during the visit, and they were happy to contribute to the inspection.

This was the home's first inspection since being registered.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 May 2025

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	requires improvement to be 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

One child has moved in since the home was registered. They remain the only child living in the home. They said that they like living in the home, that they feel safe and that they have positive and trusting relationships with staff.

The child's move into the home was positive. Leaders and managers ensured there was a well-considered and sensitive plan in place. The plan was child centred and aimed at alleviating any potential anxieties. This approach helped the child to become familiar with the home environment and to form relationships with staff before moving in.

The home is comfortable, homely and well maintained. Staff actively involve the child in the development of the environment and listen to their views. Staff have also supported the child to personalise their bedroom with a choice of decorative features and other personal items, such as family photos. This helps the child to feel valued and creates a sense of belonging.

Staff have a good understanding of the child's physical health needs. They have ensured that they have gathered appropriate information relating to the child's medical history to support them to meet their needs. Furthermore, the child has been registered with local health services and has attended all routine appointments.

The child has made positive progress with their education attendance since moving into the home. Staff value the importance of the child's education and work with teachers to ensure positive engagement. When barriers to learning arise, staff advocate for the child in a way any good parent would. As a result, the child can continue to learn and make progress.

Staff support the child to spend time positively with people important to them. For example, the child spends regular time with various members of their family. Staff also encourage the child to maintain positive relationships with friends, arranging for them to visit the home, spend time in the community together and have sleepovers.

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

Staff provide the child with consistent daily routines and boundaries. This ensures they are provided with a sense of stability. Staff are empathetic to the child's feelings and help them to develop coping strategies, with their involvement. This approach means that the child feels listened to and, as a result, there are few safeguarding incidents. Behaviours do not escalate to a level of risk that is unsafe, meaning that staff do not physically restrain children.

Support plans and risk assessments are detailed and regularly reviewed. Plans have clear guidance and strategies to help staff keep the child safe. Additionally, staff

demonstrate a good understanding of the child's behaviours and know how to de-escalate situations. Staff involve the child in the review of their plans, which allows them to reflect on and identify what is working well.

Staff have a good understanding of the risks posed to the child online. The child has recently been provided with a mobile phone and staff have ensured appropriate parental controls are in place to prevent access to any inappropriate material. Furthermore, staff have involved the child in developing their own mobile phone rules, which means that the child is fully engaged with the safety measures in place.

On one occasion, when the child left the home without authorisation, staff showed a good understanding of the protocols. They followed the child, keeping them in sight throughout. Staff were caring and nurturing in their approach, and this ensured that the child returned safely after a short period.

There has been one allegation relating to the conduct of a staff member. There was an initial delay in this being reported to managers, although prompt action was taken to reduce the risk once senior managers had been made aware. In addition, the concern was reported to safeguarding agencies. Furthermore, senior managers with known conflicts of interest were involved in the process which contravenes guidance within the company policy. These leaders have now left the organisation.

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

Leaders' monitoring of the home since registration has been poor. This has meant that leaders and managers have not had effective oversight of their work. This has contributed towards negative cultures developing in the staff team and leaders making the decision for some staff to be made redundant from their roles.

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure effective oversight and monitoring of recruitment processes when employing staff with conflicts of interest. For example, a senior manager, who has now left the organisation, completed the interview process and recruitment checks for someone they had a personal relationship with. In addition, when individuals have been appointed to leadership roles, appropriate checks have not been completed. This poor practice compromises the integrity and safety of the recruitment process, directly conflicts with company policy and has the potential to compromise the safety of children.

Leaders and managers are aware of the shortfalls and have taken accountability. They have reflected on past events and demonstrated learning. The remaining management team members are child focused and show a commitment to make improvements, moving forward. A new responsible individual has also now been appointed.

Staff are incredibly positive about their roles. They feel that the atmosphere has improved and that the manager really values their worth and well-being. They feel that

the support they receive from the manager, and the training provided, is helping them to develop in their roles and support their ongoing progression. All staff are currently undertaking the relevant qualification.

Relationships with professionals and partner agencies are positive. One professional was positive about the progress the child had made and about improvements in their presentation since living in the home. They also spoke about the positive support provided around the child's mobile phone and around spending time with people who are important to them.

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 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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) In particular, leaders and managers should ensure there are effective processes in place for the safer recruitment of staff, including when there are potential conflicts of interest, and ensure effective monitoring of these processes.	26 June 2025
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which— is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect; and sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular— provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response;	26 June 2025

describe the measures which may be necessary to protect children following an allegation of abuse or neglect; and describe how and to whom staff are to report, without delay, any concern about abuse or neglect of a child. (Regulation 34 (1)(a)(b) (2)(d)(e)(f)) In particular, leaders and managers should ensure any concerns regarding staff conduct are investigated in line with the home's policies.	
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 individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— 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)(d)) In particular, this relates to leaders and managers ensuring appropriate recruitment checks are carried out when appointing a responsible individual.	26 June 2025

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: 2786408

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: City Social Care Services Limited

Registered provider address: 2 Riverside, Campbell Road, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 4RJ

Responsible individual:

Registered manager: Kirsten Porter

Inspector

Carl Wilton, Social Care Inspector

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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

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