

2793156

Registered provider: Astar Care Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home registered with Ofsted in November 2024 and is operated by a private company. It provides care for one child who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, one child was living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2024.

Inspection dates: 30 April and 1 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	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

During the inspection, the inspector spoke to the child living in the home.

Since the home registered, two children have moved out, and two children have moved in. One child has moved to live in another home operated by the provider, and they were able to move in a well-planned and managed way. This included several members of staff being able to move with the child to ensure consistency. Children moving into the home have been sensitively welcomed, even when there has been little time to plan.

The home is a safe and welcoming environment. The child has personalised their bedroom by choosing soft furnishings and decorations. The staff team is helping the child develop a sense of belonging and ownership in the home. There are family photos and creative pieces made by the child displayed throughout the home. The child said, 'I like it here; the best thing about it is the staff.'

The child has a large family, and the staff have created a wall that is dedicated to the child's family tree with photos of siblings and family members. Family time is supported and encouraged, and staff manage it in a safe way. The child has recently been able to have a sleepover with a sibling, which further strengthens their familial relationships.

The staff value education and have high aspirations for the child. The child is encouraged to be ambitious and plan for their future. During the school day, staff remain on site so that they are accessible for the child should they require additional support. This has meant that the child has been able to increase the amount of time they spend in school, which is beneficial to their learning. Staff employ creative ways to learn at home, such as encouraging the child to write letters and poems to express their feelings and wishes.

Staff meet the child's health needs. Referrals are made to specialist services when required. Staff promptly attend to accidents and injuries, seeking medical advice when necessary. The child is supported with their emotional health by staff who understand the effect of trauma and the need to employ a high level of nurture.

The child can participate in a range of activities. Staff encourage the child to develop new interests and recognise the benefits of positive social interactions with peers.

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

The child is kept safe by staff who know them well and are attuned to their needs. The child has developed trusting relationships with staff in the home. An independent reviewing officer said, 'The team are great at celebrating [name of child]'s achievements and personality. They are invested in the child. The quality of care that is provided is excellent.'

Staff employ a therapeutic approach and promote positive behaviour through rewards and incentives. Staff use a variety of methods to enhance the child's self-esteem, such as keeping a praise book to record positive behaviours and achievements. Negative consequences are rare. When applied, they are fair and proportionate.

There are clear plans in place that help the staff understand how to meet the child's needs. Incidents are generally well managed, and staff are trained and skilled in de-escalation techniques. This promotes a positive and non-confrontational culture. There are clear boundaries in the home and measures in place to identify risk to the child. Staff regularly check the child's mobile phone and educate them about staying safe when using the internet and social media.

There have been several missing-from-home episodes since the home opened. There are clear processes and procedures in place for staff to follow when such incidents occur. Staff actively search for children and work alongside safeguarding partners and parents to ensure their safe return. The frequency of the child going missing from care has significantly decreased.

Following most incidents of the child misusing substances, staff have sought medical advice and have taken the child to the hospital when necessary. However, on one occasion, staff did not seek medical advice after suspected cannabis misuse. When staff identify or suspect substance misuse, they search the child's bedroom to remove any potentially hazardous items.

Staff receive training on safeguarding issues and understand how to escalate concerns. The home has safely recruited new members of staff to ensure that only suitable individuals work with the child.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is suitably experienced and qualified. She knows the child well, and her practice is child centred and meets the child's needs. The manager has management responsibility for another home operated by the provider. The manager is supported by an experienced responsible individual and deputy manager.

The manager has implemented several changes to help the staff build confidence in their roles. The team is stable, and staff are committed to their roles. They provide consistent care for the child. Staff say they feel well supported by the manager and the deputy manager. Staff receive regular supervision sessions that allow them to reflect on their practice. Regular team meetings serve as a forum for discussion and learning.

Staff have access to a wealth of training opportunities. The manager ensures that staff have the skills and knowledge to care for the child. When new needs emerge, further training is sought in a timely manner. Some staff are experienced and qualified in childcare. New members of staff complete an induction before being enrolled to attain a recognised childcare qualification.

Staff and the manager work effectively with other agencies, professionals and family members. They attend all relevant meetings and advocate for the child when necessary. One education professional said, 'The manager and staff have been proactive at working alongside us and have worked promptly to address any concerns raised.'

The manager has embedded a range of systems to monitor the quality of care afforded to the child. However, the reports from the independent person do not always evidence a high level of scrutiny of the quality of care with a lack of external feedback. Additionally, there have been two months where no visit has taken place. This reduces the regulator's oversight of practice in the home.

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 registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. A visit by the independent person to the home may be unannounced. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a) (3))	2 July 2025

Recommendation

- The registered person should convene a multi-agency meeting to formulate an agreed plan in relation to low-level substance misuse by children living at the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.7)

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: 2793156

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Astar Care Group Limited

Registered provider address: 5a Warbreck Avenue, Liverpool L9 4RL

Responsible individual: Alexander Dingle

Registered manager: Laura Dingle

Inspector

Eve Ostridge, Social Care Inspector

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