

SC005751

Registered provider: Care Afloat Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private company and provides care for one child with social and emotional difficulties. The provider offers an educational service and therapeutic support from an external contractor.

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

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2022.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 October 2023

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: 4 May 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/05/2022	Full	Good
23/02/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
21/08/2019	Full	Good
24/04/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff working with the child know them well. Staff who are new to the child have quickly developed positive relationships with them. Staff understand the child's individual needs and have demonstrated this throughout the inspection. The child said that staff are fun and keep them safe.

Family time is supported in line with relevant plans, ensuring it meets the individual needs of the child. This helps the child to maintain relationships that are important to them. The child is also given the opportunity to take part in meaningful activities with the staff, which take into account the child's hobbies and interests.

Staff support the child in school, and they work collaboratively with the school to ensure that the child's educational needs are met. Since moving into the home, the child's engagement with education has improved.

Staff ensure that the child has access to health and well-being services when they need them. This includes access to the commissioned therapist, who also consults with the team in meetings to ensure that the child's therapeutic needs are shared and understood by the team.

Internal plans are detailed and robust documents that provide staff with clear information and guidance to support the child. However, up-to-date placing authority care plans are not in place, which means that staff do not have access to the current local authority plans.

When children are new to the home, they are made to feel welcome. This is done with the best possible planning, considering the children's individual circumstances and staff's skills and training. There is a child-centred approach to deciding if the home and staff team are able to meet the child's needs before they move in.

A children's guide is given to the child before they move into the home. However, this is not presented in a child-friendly format. In addition to this, there are missed opportunities to complete direct work sessions with the child to ensure that they understand the rules and boundaries in the home and what to expect from the staff.

Since the last inspection, one child has moved on from the home. Despite challenges in engaging the child with the new placement, staff ensured that the child's views and wishes were heard so that the child's new placement was suitable for them. Staff also supported the move to ensure that the end of the placement was a positive one.

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

Staff put the well-being of children at the centre of their practice. The child said that if they have any worries or concerns, they can talk to staff and they will help. There are behaviour management plans in place. These are detailed documents that give clear guidance and strategies for staff to follow. Staff demonstrate their understanding of these documents in their care for the child.

There are a small number of occasions when children have been missing from the home. When children have been missing, staff have responded appropriately. They have notified relevant professionals and family, and they have supported the child to return quickly and safely.

Since the last inspection, there have been no physical restraints. Staff have positive relationships with the child, and there have been no occasions when situations have escalated to the point where restraint has needed to be considered. Any imposed consequences are reasonable and proportionate. They are recorded, and the child's views are added.

There is a significant issue with damp in the home. The manager has addressed this with the landlord. However, the action taken has not rectified the problem, and it has the potential to cause harm to the child if it is not quickly resolved.

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

There is an experienced registered manager in post. There is also a deputy manager who provides support to the staff and child. Staff spoken to describe the manager and deputy as readily available to provide support and guidance. However, the manager has not included their hours worked on the rota. This means that there is no clear record of the manager's attendance at the home.

There is a stable and reliable staff team in place, and any vacancies are being addressed through recruitment. Staff from other services in the organisation are currently being used to cover any gaps on the rota. This provides consistency for the child.

Supervision takes place regularly for staff. Supervision sessions focus on children's experiences and staff practice. Team meetings are well attended by the team and are used as a learning and development opportunity for staff as well as to share information within the team.

Staff are trained in mandatory subjects. However, there are some shortfalls in refresher training and in training to meet the children's individual needs, such as foetal alcohol syndrome training and mental health training. In addition to this, the deputy manager is not trained in safer recruitment.

The manager uses regulatory monitoring systems and reviews the quality of care provided. However, these reports are not always made available to Ofsted, which affects the external monitoring of children's safety and welfare.

There are some shortfalls in the home environment. The home is in need of decoration, and there are chips and holes in the plaster and paintwork throughout the home. In addition to this, there are no photos of the child to help them feel a sense of belonging 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 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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(d)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that the issues with damp are resolved as quickly as possible.	4 December 2023
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child; regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care. (Regulation 7 (1) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)) Specifically, the registered person should ensure that the child has the opportunity to engage in key-worker sessions and/or direct work sessions to ensure that their views, wishes and feelings are heard and recorded and to make sure that staff share appropriate information with the child.	13 November 2023

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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff have the necessary training specific to children's individual needs. The registered person must also ensure that staff receive regular refresher training in relevant topics.	13 November 2023
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that current placing authority care plans and placement plans are kept on file and include the child's current placement arrangements.	13 November 2023
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— HMCI. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a))	13 November 2023
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed. (Regulation 45 (1) (4)(a))	13 November 2023

Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that rotas include details of the hours the manager has been present in the home.	13 November 2023
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Recommendation

- The registered person must ensure that the children's guide is made available to all children when their placement in the home is agreed (or on arrival at the home if the placement is made in an emergency), and it must be age-appropriate, provided in an accessible format and explained to each child to make sure they understand it. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.21)

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: SC005751

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care Afloat Limited

Registered provider address: 158-160 Birkrig, Digmoor Parade, Skelmersdale
WN8 9HP

Responsible individual: Michael Fletcher

Registered manager: Claire Russell

Inspector

Katie Tomlinson, Social Care Inspector

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