

SC006013

Registered provider: Care Afloat Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and operated by a private provider.

It is registered to provide care for one child with social and emotional needs.

One child is currently being cared for in the home. The inspector spoke with the child as part of the inspection.

There has been no registered manager since September 2024. A manager has been appointed, and she has submitted her application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 April 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: 29 May 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/05/2024	Full	Good
24/01/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
25/04/2022	Full	Good
13/03/2019	Interim	Not judged

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The child has lived in the home for a long time. They have positive and stable relationships with the staff, who know the child very well. This provides the child with a strong sense of safety and security within the home.

Staff ensure the child attends school regularly. When the child faces challenges in school, the manager works with the headteacher to resolve issues quickly to reduce the impact on attendance. The child has made progress in education. They now attend school on a full timetable and have ambitions for a vocational career. Staff are working with school to ensure the child is enrolled on the right college course in September to support their career pathway.

The child is encouraged to engage in activities outside the home, such as going to the gym, go-karting, nature walks and visits to places of interest. The child has enjoyed a caravan holiday with staff.

Staff support the child's relationships with people who are important to them. Staff make every effort to promote and maintain relationships between the child and their family members.

Staff do not capture the views, wishes and feelings of the child. This does not allow the child to have their views heard about the care they receive.

The child's time in the home is not recorded in photo or memory books. This is a missed opportunity to capture valuable childhood memories.

The home is clean and tidy and provides a homely environment. However, there are areas of the home that require redecoration and maintenance. The bathroom is looking very tired and dated. The manager recognises this, and work has begun on the redecoration of the home.

The child is helped to develop life skills appropriate to their age in preparation for independence. The child is encouraged to develop skills such as budgeting, cooking and doing household chores, and they have opened their own bank account and deposit money weekly.

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

The child identifies staff as trusted adults whom they can approach with their concerns. Staff respond to concerns warmly and sensitively.

There have been few changes in the staff team in the last year, but staff practice remains consistent. Communication between staff is clear, therefore there are consistent boundaries in the home. This enables the child to feel secure.

Restraint is not used in the home. Staff can use their positive relationship with child and de-escalation training to calm potential crisis situations, preventing further escalation. The home does not use consequences. Reward incentives are in place to encourage involvement in education and independence tasks and promote and reward positive outcomes.

Staff understand the risks of the child they care for and how to support them. However, risk assessments and behaviour management plans do not always give clear strategies for staff to follow.

The home's allocated therapist works directly with staff to ensure they have a good understanding of the impact of children's past experiences. This enables staff to have discussions on key issues sensitively, helping the child to identify their emotions and express them safely. This is helping the child to accept their past and be hopeful for their future.

Incidents in the home are extremely rare. When they do occur, staff respond appropriately to ensure the child's safety. However, documentation of incidents does not always capture triggers, support used and outcome of the incident. Oversight of incidents is not always completed by a person independent of the incident to provide an objective view.

Fire drills are not routinely taking place, and the child is not always involved in fire drills. This does not ensure that staff and the child know how to respond effectively in the case of a house fire.

Leaders and managers ensure they follow safer recruitment procedures. This ensures that staff are fully checked before being able to provide care to children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has a focused vision for the children and staff team. She is committed to improving outcomes for the children.

The manager has good oversight of the home. All reports and plans have evidence of the manager's oversight. The manager uses regulation 44 and 45 reports as a monitoring tool and has recently implemented daily chronologies and plans to use the information gathered to identify themes and patterns for the child and an indication of staff contribution.

Staff receive regular supervision. Supervision sessions are supportive and focus on reflection of practice and planning for children and provide clear actions. Staff feel supported and enjoy working in the home.

Induction programmes for new starters are in place and ensure that staff are aware of key information and processes to aid their role.

Team meetings take place monthly and are well attended by the team. The home's therapist provides a report to help staff reflect on practice and devise support strategies for the child. Team meetings are used to review risk assessments, policies and procedures and plan support, discussions and activities for the child for the upcoming month.

Not all staff have completed training specific to the individual needs of the child, such as internet safety and substance misuse. There are also significant gaps in mandatory training, with some staff needing to complete training on health and safety, food hygiene and fire safety.

The home's quality of care review lacks analysis and evaluation. It does not provide an oversight of what is taking place in the home or the journey for the child. Plans moving forward are not specific to the home, child or staff or targeted to achieve set outcomes with set time frames.

The home's development plan is generic and not specific to the home. It identifies general areas of development for the home and staff team, but it does not identify strengths and areas of development for individual staff for their professional development.

Managers and staff have built positive relationships with professionals involved in the care of the child. Professionals report that managers and staff are communicative and keep them updated on all aspects of the child's care.

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
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— make arrangements for persons working at the home to receive suitable training in fire prevention; and ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. (Regulation 25 (1)(c)(d))	14 May 2025
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that risk assessments clearly detail responses to children's identified risks and that recording of incidents is clear, detailing triggers, staff response and outcomes and oversight from someone independent of the incident.	14 May 2025
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—	14 May 2025

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of 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)(2) (1)(c) (f)(h)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff have completed mandatory training and training to meet the child's individual needs. The home's manager must complete and provide the regulator an evaluative quality of care review report at least once every six months which includes the opinions and feedback of children and the care they are provided and any action to improve the quality of care. In addition, the home's manager must complete a home development plan which is specific to the home, the staff and children's needs, including a plan for moving forward for what the manager wants to achieve.	
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— engage with them. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare; 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.	14 May 2025

(Regulation 7 (1)(b) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))

Specifically, the home's manager must ensure that the staff are capturing the child's views, wishes and feelings on the care they are provided. Additionally, staff must ensure they are documenting the child's time in the home through memory books to capture memories of their time in the home.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming and supportive, and meet children's basic day-to-day needs and physical necessities. In particular, ensure that redecoration is completed to a good standard and that homely accessories for the bathroom are provided. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)

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: SC006013

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care Afloat Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Michael Fletcher

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Renée Sims, Social Care Inspector
Claire Hobbs, Social Care Inspector (QAV)

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