

SC008274

Registered provider: Searchlight Care Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private company. It is registered to provide care for one child who has lived through adverse childhood experiences.

The manager has been in post since October 2022 and registered with Ofsted on 16 May 2023. She has the relevant experience and qualifications for the role.

At the time of the inspection, one child was living in the home. The child was present during the inspection and was spoken to by the inspector.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 August 2024

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: 12 September 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/09/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
28/03/2023	Full	Good
01/06/2021	Full	Good
02/01/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the assurance visit in March 2024, one child has come to live in the home. The manager ensured that the child had a well-planned move. The manager and staff visited the child and sent them a video of the home. The child was able to choose the decoration for their bedroom and to tell staff about their interests and hobbies. As a result of this preparation, the child has quickly settled and established good relationships with staff. The child says the home and the staff are 'perfect' and there is nothing they would change.

The child benefits from a range of activities based on their interests. The child loves horse riding and animals. Staff have arranged for the child to go riding at the local stables and to have regular trips to the local zoo. The child looks forward to the occasions when the manager brings her dog to the home. Staff are playful with the child. They play board games and dance to Tik Tok videos with the child. Sharing the child's hobbies and interests enables staff to build strong relationships with the child.

Despite the best efforts of the manager, the child does not currently have a school place. Staff have been creative in providing educational activities using online resources, which the child enjoys. The manager has strongly advocated with other professionals to identify an appropriate school place. As a result, a tutor has now been identified for the new school year. Sadly, there is currently no clear plan for the child's return to formal education.

Staff have registered the child with local medical practices and supported them to attend routine appointments. The manager has escalated concerns with specialist agencies when there have been concerns about the child's emotional health.

Arrangements are in place that safely support the child to spend time with people who are important to them. This helps the child to maintain lifelong relationships. A parent said that communication with staff is good and that staff 'let me know what's going on'. The parent said staff are 'more like parents than carers'.

Daily records are institutional in tone and content and staff do not always praise and celebrate children's positive achievements. This is a missed opportunity to record a child's life story in a way that is helpful to the child.

Staff support the child to explore their identity. They talk with the child about the child's likes and dislikes, and they help the child to choose clothes that suit their tastes. Staff develop the child's understanding of the world around them. For example, staff have celebrated Women's Equality Day with the child and educated the child about women's suffrage.

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

Managers have worked closely with the child's social worker to ensure that the child's risks are fully understood. Detailed risk management plans, which are regularly updated, guide staff to manage the child's complex behaviours. As a result, staff understand the risks posed to the child and the child's lived experiences in detail. Incidents are rare and staff have not used physical intervention to manage the child's complex behaviours.

Staff have quickly developed strong, trusting relationships with the child, which have enabled the child to share their worries and concerns. The child benefits from regular planned and unplanned discussions with staff on how to recognise and respond to risk. This helps the child to understand how to stay safe. Consistent routines and well-defined boundaries help the child to feel safe and contained. As a result, the child is safe and they say they feel safe.

Staff take their duty to safeguard the child seriously. When the child is at risk of harm, managers and staff follow safeguarding procedures. They share information with safeguarding agencies, including social workers and the police, and participate and contribute to statutory safeguarding meetings. When necessary, they consult with the local authority designated officer and implement agreed strategies to keep the child safe.

On one occasion, staff did not follow the child's risk assessment when the child said they wanted to harm themselves. Staff did not respond to the child with nurture and care and the child was left unsupported for a short period of time. More positively, the manager escalated concerns about the child's mental health with services the following day.

Staff focus on the use of rewards and incentives to encourage and recognise positive behaviour, and the use of consequences is rare.

Staff manage health and safety matters effectively. As a result, the child lives in a home that is physically safe and free from hazards. When agency staff have been used to care for the child overnight, the manager has ensured that workers have been safely recruited.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is dedicated to the home and enthusiastic about achieving positive outcomes for the child and the staff. They have high standards and challenge other professionals appropriately to ensure that the child has what they need. A deputy manager supports the manager and both have a consistent presence in the home. Staff are extremely positive about the support they receive. One staff said, 'Management wise, I cannot fault them, both the registered manager and deputy manager are wonderful and supportive.'

The home is fully staffed. Since the last inspection, a new team of staff has come to work in the home. Three staff have a qualification in residential childcare and two are enrolled. One staff is undergoing a planned induction. The child has received consistent care that has enabled them to develop relationships with adults who know them well. Managers regularly consult with staff and enable staff to work well as a team. One staff said, 'The whole team are there to support each other if needed and nothing is ever too much to ask.'

Managers ensure that staff receive regular supervision and an annual appraisal. However, supervision is not reflective, and managers do not set goals for staff to support them with their development. This limits staff's progress and sense of aspiration. Additionally, the manager's development needs are not understood as they have not received an appraisal. Also, managers do not always ensure that staff receive a copy of their supervision notes. This does not support accountability.

Managers use a range of systems to monitor the quality of care. These are generally effective, and managers have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Occasionally, managers do not challenge staff when they do not use approved strategies to manage the child's complex behaviours. Additionally, on one occasion, managers failed to carry out a review of practice following a serious safeguarding incident. These are missed opportunities to improve the quality of care the child receives.

The manager ensures that the child has many opportunities to share their views and contribute to their care. Responses to allegations and complaints are effective and help to ensure that the child feels listened to and is kept safe from harm.

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 staff— have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iii)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that staff follow the child's risk assessments and agreed recording procedures when a child shows complex behaviours	1 September 2024
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that staff receive good-quality supervision which is reflective and addresses staff's strengths and areas for development. Also, that the registered manager receives an annual appraisal and has a personal development plan.	15 September 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's 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. Staff should understand their important role in encouraging the child to reflect on and understand their history, according to their age and understanding. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraphs 14.4 to 14.5)
- The registered person should ensure that a note of the content and/or outcomes of supervision sessions is kept and to ensure that both the person giving the supervision and staff member have a copy of the record. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 13.4)

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: SC008274

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Searchlight Care Services Ltd

Registered provider address: Marcus House, Parkhall Road, Longton, Stoke on Trent ST3 5XA

Responsible individual: Paul Turner

Registered manager: Linzi Reeves

Inspector

Karen Gillingwater, Social Care Inspector

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