

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.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 September 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
---	--

How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
---	---------------------------------

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

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 28 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/03/2023	Full	Good
01/06/2021	Full	Good
02/01/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/10/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

At the time of the inspection, there were no children living in the home. Since the last inspection, two children have moved in and out of the home in a short space of time.

Care planning for children requires improvement. Children's high-risk behaviours and needs were not appropriately considered by the manager. As a result, both children moved from the home in an unplanned way.

Despite the shortfalls, children made some progress, for example, in their physical well-being. Staff ensured that children were registered with local health services and attended appointments when needed. In addition, children were supported through one-to-one discussions to improve their personal and oral hygiene.

Children engaged in education. One child regularly attended school. When concerns arose in school, staff were proactive in supporting and addressing any issues. When a child did not have an education placement, the staff worked with them at home and advocated for online tutoring.

Children were supported to spend time with their families and benefited from maintaining close relationships with their loved ones. Staff made sure that children had access to their family members and supported family visits in the home and community. This meant children had positive time with their family and maintained their identity.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Managers and staff do not always follow safeguarding procedures or follow the child's risk assessment. There have been two occasions, following restraints, when the manager has not informed the appropriate agencies after the child alleged they had been harmed. Furthermore, the child's views were not obtained by someone independent. This inconsistent approach had the potential to place the child at risk of harm.

Restraints were usually proportionate and well managed. However, on one occasion, staff used restraint that was not proportionate to prevent a child from leaving the home. There was no immediate risk to the child's safety. Furthermore, this approach was not agreed by the placing authority or documented in the child's plan. Additionally, staff also, on occasions, locked the front door to prevent a child from leaving the home.

Consequences are not always restorative in nature. For example, staff restricted the use of electronic devices or stopped a child from taking part in activities. Leaders and managers have not monitored the use of consequences effectively. As a result, children were not helped to recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves or others. This impacted on their day-to-day experiences.

The fire risk assessment has not been carried out by a competent person, therefore, the manager could not be assured the home is compliant with fire safety regulations. This could potentially place the child and staff at risk of harm in an emergency.

When children go missing, staff follow clear procedures to ensure that children are kept safe. Staff have taken appropriate action and followed protocols. They ensured they actively searched for children and contacted appropriate agencies such as the police to report children missing. Children were welcomed back to the home in a positive manner on their return. They were able to speak to an independent person about their experience of going missing from the home.

New staff have been safely recruited. Recruitment of staff is thorough and robust. This ensures that only adults who are safe to work with children are employed in the home.

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

Managers have a range of monitoring systems, however, they are not always effective. On two occasions, a child's comments were not explored or acted on. This means the child's concerns were not considered and leaders and managers have not acted to improve the experiences of the child.

The manager does not always escalate concerns appropriately. She has failed to challenge the local authority over several issues relating to children's progress or well-being. For example, the manager felt full information had not been shared for one child before they moved into the home, compromising how staff could meet their needs. Also, a child was not spoken to following allegations against staff. Consequently, children's experiences have not improved.

The independent person does not always attend the home within regulatory timescales. Furthermore, they do not always regularly seek the views of children when they visit the home. However, the manager was able to demonstrate that she has challenged the independent visitor. Leaders and managers have taken positive steps to address this shortfall by appointing a new independent visitor.

Since the last inspection, the staff team has changed significantly. A high number of staff have left and new staff have been recruited. Despite this, sufficiency has not been affected and there is a suitable range of qualified and experienced staff to care for children. In addition, staff say they enjoy working in the home and feel supported by the manager.

Staff receive a wide range of training. Training is delivered through various methods, online and face to face. New staff receive a well-planned induction. Their progress is frequently reviewed to support their learning. Additionally, staff receive regular supervision and appraisal. Staff are also encouraged to develop and progress in their roles and are enrolled on the relevant qualification at the appropriate time. This ensures that children are cared for by knowledgeable and skilled staff.

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)) This specifically relates to ensuring the person completing the fire risk assessment has the correct certification and competence.	3 November 2023
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— are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vii)) This specifically relates to the manager ensuring that safeguarding concerns are shared with the appropriate agency, in line with the company policy and the child's risk assessment.	3 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.	3 November 2023

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)) This specifically relates to ensuring the manager has effective oversight of concerns raised by children, and acts on and resolves these concerns.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) This specifically relates to the manager ensuring that children's needs and risks are assessed effectively before they move into the home to determine if their needs can be met. Additionally, to making sure there is a joined-up approach to working with external professionals in relation to the care planning for children.	3 November 2023
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (2)) This specifically relates to the manager ensuring that restraint is used proportionately and in line with agreement	3 November 2023

from the local authority. Furthermore, this relates to the manager ensuring consequences given to children are proportionate and restorative.	
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5(c)) This specifically relates to the manager ensuring effective challenge to the local authority regarding withholding information, ensuring children are spoken to following an allegation and escalating concerns relating to children's education.	3 November 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that an individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person makes a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

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

Carl Wilton, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

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

© Crown copyright 2023