

SC010699

Registered provider: N/A

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

- A private provider operates this home.
- The home provides care for up to five children.
- The provider states in its statement of purpose that the home accommodates children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.
- The registered manager has been registered since May 2018.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 July 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **inadequate**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 27 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/02/2019	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
11/06/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
08/01/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
16/05/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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, 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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; strive to gain each child's respect and trust; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive	30/09/2019

relationships with children; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children; understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them. (Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(viii)(ix)(x)(xi)(xii)(xiii)) Specifically, in relation to ensuring that children feel listened to and are kept safe from bullying.	
The registered person must— notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(b))	30/09/2019
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance; so far as reasonably practicable in the light of the child's age and understanding, the child is informed in advance of the intention to do the monitoring or surveillance; and the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d))	30/09/2019

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; ensure that the records are kept up to date; and retain the records for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry. (Regulation 37 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c)) Specifically, maintain the admissions and discharge register.	30/09/2019
The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— HMCI the placing authorities of children; (Regulation 44 (7) (a)(c)) Specifically, in relation to ensuring that the HMCI and the placing authority are kept up to date with what is happening at the home.	30/09/2019
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. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person	30/09/2019

must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report"). 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; and make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home. The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c)(3)(4)(a)(b)(5))	
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— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) Specifically, in relation to ensuring that children's risk assessments are regularly updated and that children are protected from bullying within the home.	30/09/2019*
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.	30/09/2019*

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(v)(vi)(vii)) Specifically, in ensuring that the home is an environment where children can build up trust and feel they are believed when they report their concerns.	
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure (“the user”), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;	30/09/2019

within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) Specifically, in relation to the recording of any restraint or physical intervention with children.	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform. (Regulation 32(1)(2)(a)(b)(3)(b))	30/09/2019*
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the	30/09/2019

registered person to— ensure that staff— understand and apply the home’s statement of purpose; protect and promote each child’s welfare; treat each child with dignity and respect; provide personalised care that meets each child’s needs, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans, taking account of the child’s background; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 6(1)(2)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vii)) Specifically, in relation to understanding the statement of purpose and ensuring that individual care plans are followed in partnership with placing authorities.	
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child’s education and training targets, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child’s relevant plans; and that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child’s learning. (Regulation 8(1)(2)(a)(i)(v)(x)(b)) Specifically, in relation to ensuring that children are engaged in educational activities when they do not attend school and ensuring that children are transported to school in time for the	30/09/2019

start of lessons.	
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans; understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding. (Regulation 10(1)(a)(2)(a)(i)(ii)) Specifically, to encourage children to attend appointments but where they refuse to ensure that further medical advice is sought from a medical professional.	30/09/2019
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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for	30/09/2019*

each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(a)–(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h))	
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which— is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect; and sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular— provide for the prompt referral of an allegation about current or ongoing abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the home is located; provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response. (Regulation 34(1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(d)) Specifically, in relation to ensuring that allegations are reported	30/09/2019

at the earliest opportunity and clear and concise records are kept.	
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Requirements marked with * are subject to a compliance notice

Recommendations

- The children's home must produce a children's guide. The children's guide must be 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 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 homes regulations including the quality standards,' page 24, paragraph 4.21)
- Ensure that staff have the skills and confidence to communicate easily and understand the importance of listening to, involving and responding to the children they care for. Staff should understand that they have a responsibility to observe, notice and respond to children who are expressing their views, acknowledging that it is not the sole responsibility of the child to 'tell'. They should also understand how children might communicate their feelings through their behaviour, or non-verbally, especially where the child has a disability which does not allow them to communicate as others might. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards,' page 22, paragraph 4.10)

Specifically, in relation to ensuring that children have opportunities to meet with staff for key-work sessions or on a one-to-one basis.

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. The Statement of Purpose is an important document in the process of care planning as it sets out the needs of children the home is set up and equipped to care for. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards,' page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- Regulation 40(4) requires the registered person to notify Ofsted and other relevant persons if one of the situations specified in regulation 40(4)(a)-(d) occurs, or if there is an incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home which the registered person considers to be serious (40(4)(e)). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards,' page 63, paragraph 14.10)
- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards,' page 61, paragraph 13.2)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Children do not receive good-quality individualised care in this home. The statement of purpose has changed so that younger children have been admitted to the home. However, the staff team is not adequately trained to understand the developmental needs of the younger children that have been admitted. One commissioner said, 'They are confident in approaches with older teenagers, but recently placed younger children have been a different challenge for them. There are gaps in their knowledge for younger children and lots of practice issues to be resolved.'

Recent changes to the staff team have resulted in an increase in the number of agency staff working at the home. Although some positive relationships were seen, children said that they did not feel listened to by staff. One child said, 'Staff didn't listen to or believe me. I called the police, but they didn't come.'

Children do not make enough progress from their starting points. One child regularly arrives late for school. Staff and managers do not hold high expectations for children to go to school and engage in learning. An educational professional said, 'The expectation that he comes to school and is in learning isn't there. He is behind in his learning and needs to be here.'

Health needs are not routinely being met. Staff have been unable to get children to attend health appointments despite concerns that medication may be required. Staff accept children's decisions not to attend despite their young age. They do not seek further health advice, contact the placing authority or think creatively about how to persuade children to attend. One social worker stated, 'We are concerned that the home is not meeting the basic needs of children.'

Children are welcomed to the home and they are given a children's guide, which explains the home's statement of purpose to them. The current guide is mainly text and is not geared towards the younger children living at the home. The current guide also gives contact details for the Ofsted children's rights officer, a post that no longer exists.

Children are allocated a key worker and a co-key worker when they move into the home. Despite high ratios of staff to children, there is a lack of recorded key-working sessions or evidence of efforts to engage with children or consult with them in any meaningful way.

Staff are reported to regularly spend time with children, but the registered manager said that they do not always write up their reports. Children are being engaged in regular activities such as baking, trampoline sessions, gymnastics and going to the cinema. The registered manager shared an example of a photograph and memorabilia album they have recently created for a child who has left the home.

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

The registered manager receives good referral information from placing authorities. However, this information is not used to consider matching the children's compatibility to one another or any risks that they may present to one another. The behaviour of some of the children admitted is currently having a negative impact on others already placed there.

Children's individual risk assessments are completed promptly when they arrive at the home. However, these assessments are not routinely updated following incidents or concerns. This means that new or agency staff may not be aware of the most recent risk areas. General risk assessments have been completed for the building work currently ongoing in the garden and for any activities that children undertake in the community. The registered manager has completed a wider risk assessment of the local area which outlines potential risks and the services available to reduce risks.

There are two recorded incidents which indicate bullying at the home. These incidents have been witnessed with little challenge from the registered manager or the staff team. These incidents have not been discussed in key-work sessions with children and there are no sanctions recorded. This does not help children to learn about consequences, nor does it keep children safe from bullying. One professional indicated that they had noticed a deterioration in a child's behaviour since their admission to the home, stating, 'X [a child] is a little bit more defiant, needs more reminders and has been involved in name-calling.'

The recording of incidents is inconsistent. Some reports are detailed and well written. Some incidents which are recorded in the daily logs do not appear in the incident record at all. One incident recorded should have been notified to Ofsted. Reports of safeguarding incidents are not all recorded in one place, nor do they detail dates, times and any actions taken. It is difficult to establish if the registered manager and staff are following the correct procedures, when record-keeping is not consistent.

There is a safeguarding policy to provide guidance to staff at the home. Staff files indicate that not all staff have completed their updated safeguarding training as expected. With the recent influx of agency staff working at the home, it is unclear from the records what safeguarding training these staff have completed.

Children do not feel listened to and the environment in the home is not conducive to children trusting staff to respond to their concerns. Children said that staff had responded with comments that led them to feel they were not believed following a recent child protection incident. Comments such as, 'I don't believe it unless I have seen it with my own eyes,' and 'Well, you don't have any injuries,' do not indicate to children that their concerns are being heard. However, the registered manager did refer the child protection concerns to the designated officer and took appropriate actions to safeguard the children.

Closed circuit television (CCTV) is in place in the communal areas of the home. A requirement was made at the last inspection in respect of the monitoring and

surveillance of children. Although the registered manager now has a policy in place in respect of the CCTV, there are no written consents from placing authorities to the monitoring or surveillance.

Records show that children have, on occasions, been held or restrained for their own or others' safety during incidents at the home. However, there are no records of these physical interventions and the restraints log does not meet the clear guidance set out in the regulation. Children are not receiving debriefs after incidents of physical interventions.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leaders and managers do not know the children well or have high expectations for their education. The registered manager has been in post since May 2018 and has completed the level 5 diploma in leadership and management. Despite this, leadership is ineffective, and this is having an impact on the level of individualised care that is offered to children.

Leaders and managers do not take effective action to ensure the efficient running of the home. Although the registered manager was aware that staff would be leaving the home, there has not been any effective succession planning to employ permanent staff members. This has required a higher level of dependency on agency staff, which is unsettling for children and does not provide consistent care.

Monitoring of the home is poor. There is not good or regular oversight of case recordings. Systems are not in place to ensure the consistent or smooth running of the home. Inconsistencies were seen in case and team meeting records. There have not been any regular children's meetings held and staff have not completed the training that they need to help them to care for the children safely.

External monitoring of the home by an independent person occurs frequently. However, no reports have been received by Ofsted since December 2018. This does not allow Ofsted to understand what is happening at the home or to ensure that children are safeguarded and their welfare protected.

The registered manager has not completed an internal review of the home as required by the regulation. This quality of care review is required every six months, but Ofsted has not received one since August 2018. The quality of care review is important to help the leaders and managers to understand the home's strengths and areas for development.

Staff spoken to during the inspection said that they felt supported by managers, whom they found to be available and involved in the running of the home. However, a review of staff supervision files showed significant gaps between their supervisions.

The home's statement of purpose was updated in April 2019 but was not sent to Ofsted. This was a requirement at the last inspection in February 2019. The statement

of purpose still has conflicting information about the age range of children who can be admitted to the home.

At the interim inspection in February 2019, four requirements were repeated from the previous inspection in June 2018. At this inspection, only one of those four requirements has been met. There are a further four requirements from the interim inspection that have not been met and are repeated here.

Leaders and managers are aware of some of the shortfalls at the home but have not been able to change or drive improvements. This is reflected in the number of requirements that have been repeated and the lack of overall monitoring of the service.

Leaders and managers have good links with professionals in general. There is a good initiative planned with one of the children's schools. The aim is to provide more consistency in behaviour management and gain a better understanding of younger children's developmental needs.

Leaders and managers employ a good gender balance of staff. Staff ethnicity meets the current needs of the children. Leaders and managers promote tolerance and encourage staff to meet the identity needs of the children. However, more could be done to promote a wider understanding of other cultures, religions and lifestyles.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people, and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC010699

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: 206 Turners Hill, Cheshunt, Herts EN8 9DE

Responsible individual: Dawnette Legister

Registered manager: Simonette Sehindemi

Inspector

Christine Kennet, social care inspector

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