

SC010699

Registered provider:

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 and accommodation for up to five children with social and/or emotional difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since May 2018.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 7 October 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 25 to 26 August 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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: 30 October 2019

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
30/10/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
10/07/2019	Full	Inadequate
27/02/2019	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
11/06/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

The provider temporarily closed the home in November 2020 to refurbish the property. Since reopening in March 2021, three children have lived at the home. One child left the home a few days prior to the inspection.

Staff genuinely care about the children. However, children's experiences and progress have been affected by shortfalls in staff sufficiency. Since the home reopened in March 2021, there has been an over-reliance on using agency staff to maintain staffing levels. This has unsettled some of the children and has left relationships between staff and children at times strained.

Although children are offered regular key-work sessions, these sessions vary in quality. For example, some sessions focus on giving children instructions around their behaviour rather than trying to find out the underlying causes. This approach does not align with the home's therapeutic model of care.

Children are given opportunities to take part in activities which take account of their race, culture, language, religion, interests and abilities. For example, one child enjoys playing badminton and is showing potential in the sport.

Children's privacy is not always respected. Close-circuit television cameras are used in communal areas (except for bathrooms and bedrooms). This form of surveillance has been installed without considering children's rights.

Staff support children to attend school. When children have been excluded from school, staff try hard to encourage children to engage in alternative education. However, children are sometimes reluctant to take up the additional support offered by the staff.

Staff support children to spend time with their family when it is safe to do so. For example, a parent was invited for a barbeque during the summer. This positive support helps children to maintain important relationships.

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

Staff try hard to bring in strategies that help to counter bullying. However, not all children feel safe and comfortable in the home. This has led to two children developing a volatile relationship with each other. This has contributed to an increase in one child going missing from the home. Staff and managers have been quick in asking for help from the children's placing local authorities. However, when this support has not been forthcoming not enough has been done to escalate this delay. As a result, the children's relationship remains fragile.

When children go missing from the home, staff do not always follow children's care plans and risk assessments. Furthermore, staff fail to challenge local authorities for not providing return home interviews. These shortfalls in practice create a missed opportunity to safeguard children from harm.

The high use of agency staff means that not all staff are clear about the strategies needed to support children to maintain positive behaviour. This failure has resulted in a high number of incidents occurring in the home.

Staff only use physical restraint as a last resort. However, when a physical restraint does become necessary, records are not always clear or accurate. For example, one record held conflicting information about the type of hold used and the length of time it was used. Leaders and managers have failed to address this in a timely manner. This does not help to keep children safe or demonstrate good management oversight of the service.

When children first move into the home, staff take the time to explain the fire drill. However, children's understanding of what to do in the event of a fire is not routinely practised. This does not assure staff that children continue to understand what action they need to take in the event of a fire.

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

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since May 2018. The manager is committed to delivering the best possible childcare for all the children in her care. This has included trying to secure a permanent staff team. However, despite the manager's best efforts, she has struggled to retain staff. This has resulted in an over-reliance on agency staff that has created a vulnerability in the service.

Duty rosters and staff signing-in logs are not accurate. They do not routinely include accurate information of the registered manager's shifts or the days she is on site. This does not provide oversight of accurate staffing or management presence in the home.

Children are looked after by staff who are supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare. This includes staff benefiting from regular supervision and team meetings. Feedback from professionals is, overall, positive. However, some professionals raise a concern that not all staff have received therapeutic training as outlined in the home's statement of purpose. This shortfall creates a gap in the skills and knowledge held by the staff in being able to fulfil the expectations set out in the home's statement of purpose.

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 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 each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)) Specifically, this requirement relates in particular to the high use of agency staff at this children's home and how the agency staff are supported and managed to effectively manage behaviour and meet the needs of children.	8 October 2021
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.	8 October 2021

The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it.

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;

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 (1)(a)(b) (2)

(3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))

Specifically, the registered person must ensure that all the above records are accurate and detailed. Where staff provide different accounts of the same event, the registered provider is to ensure that the record provided is an accurate description of the event.	
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; 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)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)) In particular, this relates to: ensuring that children who go missing are reported missing in line with their care and safety plans; ensuring that return home interviews are routinely requested and the findings from these are used to reduce missing episodes;	8 October 2021

ensuring that communication concerns with placing authorities are challenged and resolved to ensure minimum impact on service delivery to children.	
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))	8 October 2021
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)) In particular, the registered person must maintain: a copy of the staff duty roster of persons working at the home, and a record of the actual rosters worked; a record of any persons who reside or work at any time at the home, who are not mentioned in the records kept in accordance with paragraphs 1 or 2.	8 October 2021
Statement of purpose The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and	8 October 2021

notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision.
(Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))

In particular, this refers to ensuring that the home operates in line with the statement of purpose in the provision of therapeutically trained staff for the day-to-day care of children. Where this is not possible, the statement of purpose must be amended to reflect this.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home complies with relevant health and safety legislations, particularly in relation to ensuring that children are routinely involved in fire drills. Where children refuse, the registered person should ensure that alternative measures are continuously used to ensure there are up-to-date fire safety procedures. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: SC010699

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address:

Responsible individual: Dawnette Legister

Registered manager: Simonette Sehindemi

Inspector

Jayshree Pillay, Social Care Inspector

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