

SC022438

Registered provider: PIC Children's Services

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home registered with Ofsted in July 2001 and is owned by a private provider. It provides care for one child with social and emotional difficulties and/or learning difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, there were no children living in the home.

There has been no registered manager in post since 17 April 2024.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 September 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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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: 21 May 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

At the full inspection on 21 and 22 May 2024, compliance notices were issued under regulation 12, the protection of children standard, and regulation 13, the leadership and management standard.

At a monitoring visit on 9 July 2024, further shortfalls were identified in relation to safeguarding practices, and the leadership and management arrangements were ineffective. Ofsted deemed that the provider had not taken sufficient action to meet the compliance notices. Compliance notices were issued again under regulation 12, the protection of children standard, and regulation 13, the leadership and management standard.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/05/2024	Full	Inadequate
03/05/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
17/01/2023	Full	Inadequate
20/04/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Since the monitoring visit, the child's, safety, progress and experiences had continued to be compromised by inadequate safeguarding practice and poor leadership and management. The child moved out of the home. This move was not a positive one and the child moved out in an unplanned way.

Care planning was poor. Leaders and managers did not sufficiently and consistently consider the child's needs. The child's plans did not contain all relevant information. Consequently, staff did not have a good understanding of the child's needs and experiences.

The child does not consistently attend education or receive any informal learning. Leaders and managers do not ensure that learning opportunities are promoted for the child. Information was missing the child's education plans. This does not support staff to help the child make progress with their learning and development.

Staff do not support the child to attend health appointments. Staff do not contact specialist health services to meet the child's specific needs. Leaders, managers and staff do not escalate their concerns about gaps in the child's health information. This could impact on the child's overall health and well-being.

Staff do not have the skills to talk to the child to find out their wishes and feelings. The child's voice is not captured in their records. This impacts on the child's emotional well-being.

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

Safeguarding practices in the home are poor. Staff do not have effective strategies to protect and support the child. This has had an adverse impact on the child's overall safety and well-being.

Individual risk management plans are in place. However, leaders and managers do not share these plans with staff. This means that staff do not have the most up to date information to provide safe care for the child.

Leaders, managers and staff do not adequately respond to or implement strategies to minimise the risk of harm to the child. Leaders and managers do not ensure that staff understand their roles and responsibilities to keep the child safe.

Missing-from-home incidents have increased since the last visit. When the child is missing, there is a poor response from staff to find the child. Staff do not know how to respond when safeguarding incidents occur. For example, when the child misuses

substances in the community, staff do not take sufficient action to ensure that the child is safe. This leaves the child vulnerable to ongoing harm in the community.

Leaders, managers and staff do not consistently notify Ofsted about serious incidents. Therefore, the regulator is not provided with all relevant information to ensure that the child is safe.

Positive behaviour is not promoted in the home. The child is not given clear and consistent boundaries to help them to manage their behaviour.

Records in relation to safeguarding incidents are poor. Records do not demonstrate that staff take appropriate action to keep the child safe. Staff do not share information with relevant safeguarding professionals.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Management arrangements continue to be poor and ineffective. There is currently no registered manager in post and the acting manager is absent from work. This lack of leadership has had an adverse impact on the child's safety, progress and experiences.

Leaders and managers do not demonstrate that they understand the impact that the quality of care is having on the child's safety and overall experiences. Have not taken sufficient action to meet the compliance notices that were issued at the previous visit. Requirements from the previous visit are restated.

Since the previous visit, the manager has implemented new monitoring and review systems. However, these systems are ineffective.

The quality of staff supervisions and appraisals is poor. Supervision records do not demonstrate that managers help staff to progress in their roles. Team meetings are not held regularly.

Staff do not have the relevant skills, knowledge and training to meet the needs of the child in their care. Leaders and managers do not review staff training to ensure that staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet children's needs.

Children's records do not provide clear information about the child and are not consistently signed and dated by the relevant member of staff.

The responsible individual accepted the shortfalls. Following this the provider made the decision to cancel the home's registration.

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— 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; 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; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)) This requirement is restated.	16 October 2024
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—	16 October 2024

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; 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)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h)) This requirement is restated.	
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;	16 October 2024

support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible; that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning. (Regulation 8 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(viii)(b)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that education is promoted in the home, including informal learning. Children must be encouraged to access meaningful education and provided with appropriate resources and equipment to support them to learn. This requirement is restated.	
The health and well-being standard is that— children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. (Regulation 10 (1)(b)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that they seek specialist health services for children. This requirement is restated.	16 October 2024
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who—	16 October 2024

engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. (Regulation 7 (1)(b)(c)) Specifically, ensure that children can contribute to their support plans. This requirement is restated.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(c)) In particular, the provider must ensure that they hold up-to-date placing authority plans and use these plans to inform care planning arrangements in the home. This requirement is restated.	16 October 2024
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;	16 October 2024

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. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)) The specifically relates to the manager ensuring that positive behaviour is promoted consistently in the home. This requirement is restated.	
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; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) This specifically relates to the manager ensuring that children's files are in order, well maintained and contain details of all records of room searches, accidents and injuries. This requirement is restated.	16 October 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 (1) (4)(a)(b)(c)) In particular, the registered provider must ensure that staff receive practice-related supervisions and appraisals in line with their own policies and procedures. This requirement is restated.	16 October 2024

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. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered provider must ensure that there is an accurate record of the proposed and actual hours worked by staff in the home. This requirement is restated.	16 October 2024
When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— HMCI. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5) (7)(a))	16 October 2024

This specifically relates to the manager ensuring that reports are shared with Ofsted, visitors are supported to gather consultation and recommendations are reviewed. This requirement is restated.	
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and 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)) This requirement is restated.	16 October 2024
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; (d) a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. A notification made under this regulation— must include details of— the matter; the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and	16 October 2024

any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter; must be made or confirmed in writing. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(e) (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that notifications are made without delay and provide the regulator with an accurate overview of incidents, as well as any outcomes.	
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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: SC022438

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: PIC Children's Services

Registered provider address: PIC Children's Services Ltd, 2 North Street, Haydock, St Helens WA11 0TW

Responsible individual: Mark Fletcher

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Nichola Croft, Social Care Inspector

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