

SC022464

Registered provider: PIC Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home. The home's statement of purpose states that it provides care for one child with social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in 2019.

Inspection date: 18 April 2023

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: 5 April 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection:

Serious concerns were identified at the assurance inspection on 8 March 2023. Following that inspection, Ofsted issued two compliance notices under regulation 12 (the protection of children standard) and regulation 13 (the leadership and management standard). At this full inspection, the compliance notices were monitored, and it was determined that the provider had made sufficient progress to meet the steps in the compliance notices.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/04/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
27/10/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
30/06/2021	Full	Inadequate
07/08/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

One child lives at this home. Since the last inspection, the manager and staff team have been more effective in working together and taking steps to safeguard the child. As a result, risks to the child have been reduced.

The home is spacious, clean, tidy and decorated to a good standard. The child has personalised her bedroom. New furniture and a rug have been ordered to promote her individual preferences.

The child has positive relationships with staff who care and want the best for her. The child feels listened to, and when possible, her wishes are acted on. Staff promote positive engagement with external professionals who support the child's emotional well-being and safety. However, the child does not have an advocate. This limits her ability to seek independent support and advocacy.

Staff have worked hard to support the reduction of substance misuse for the child, and progress is evident. This has had a positive impact on her health and well-being and has reduced a number of associated risks. However, a reward system in place includes the child receiving an electronic cigarette for positive behaviour. This conflicts with their aim to reduce substance misuse. In addition, consequences are not recorded and cannot be measured for effectiveness or proportionality.

Staff support the child to see family members and develop positive friendships. This helps the child to maintain relationships with people who are important to her. There are plans in place to reduce potential risks from peers, and staff help the child to understand the risks. However, on one occasion, staff did not follow agreed plans, and this could have placed the child at risk of harm.

The child does not have a plan in place to support a successful move to semi-independent living. Staff have worked with the child in some areas to develop her independence skills. However, structured activities to support the child to improve her skills are not consistent or done in a timely manner to enable the child to develop the skills she needs to be successful.

The child is not currently in education or employment, although staff have previously promoted attendance and engagement with a college placement. Staff have struggled to engage the child in educational opportunities, and there is no structure in the home to support learning and development.

Staff provide some opportunities for the child to enjoy leisure activities, including trips to theme parks and the cinema. However, these are not planned regularly, limiting the child's opportunities to engage with staff and enjoy time out of the home.

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

The child feels safe in the home and says that she can talk to staff and knows they will do their best to keep her safe.

There has been a significant improvement in the quality of risk assessments. These now provide staff with clear information and actions to take to keep the child safe. Staff's understanding of risks and procedures has improved, resulting in enhanced safeguarding practices. Their understanding of their role when managing allegations is improving.

Safeguarding concerns are shared with external professionals in a timely way to ensure a consistent and appropriate response. Positive multi-agency working and a coordinated response have supported a reduction in risks for the child.

Medication is stored appropriately, and staff are suitably trained in this regard. However, practice and management oversight regarding medication in the home are not effective. Staff do not understand the importance of recording when medication is administered, and practice is inconsistent, leading to a number of discrepancies in record-keeping.

Safer recruitment checks are completed before staff are employed. This ensures that those working in the home are safe to work with children.

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

The manager has worked hard to address and meet the compliance notices previously issued. The manager has implemented a monitoring tool that will assist in the further development and oversight of the service; however, this is not yet embedded in practice.

There is a relatively new team of staff in the home who are developing their skills and experiences. Staff feel supported by the manager and are provided with opportunities to reflect through supervision sessions, appraisals and team meetings. However, regular agency and waking night staff are still not receiving supervision regularly.

Staff have accessed a range of training since the assurance inspection, which has assisted their understanding of the child's specific needs and risks. However, regular agency and waking night staff have not completed training to ensure that they can respond to substance misuse.

The manager has improved some of the documents, such as risk assessments. However, several records and documents are not kept up to date, completed fully and within the required timescales. Staff do not know the current plans to follow, and this could result in inconsistent care for the child.

The manager has not completed a quality of care review. This prevents effective monitoring, review and evaluation of the care afforded to children. A requirement in relation to this is repeated from the last inspection.

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 registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular the registered person must ensure that— medicines kept in the home are stored in a secure place so as to prevent any child from having unsupervised access to them; medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child; and a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c))	12 June 2023
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; and receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all staff, including agency staff, receive supervision and attend training that is relevant to the child's needs, specifically substance misuse training.	12 June 2023
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.	12 June 2023

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—

that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose;

that arrangements are in place to—

ensure the effective induction of each child into the home;

manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and

plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority;

that each child's relevant plans are followed;

that, subject to regulation 22 (contact and access to communications), contact between each child and the child's parents, relatives and friends, is promoted in accordance with the child's relevant plans;

that the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plans is requested, if—

the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child's needs;

the child is, or has been, persistently absent from the home without permission; or

the child requests a review of the child's relevant plans; and

that staff help each child to access and contribute to the records kept by the registered person in relation to the child. (Regulation 14

(1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(c)(d)(e)(i)(ii)(iii)(f))

In particular, the registered person must ensure that children have clear plans for moving on to semi-independence and that these are completed in a timely way. The registered person must ensure that children are supported to understand their plans and that staff offer opportunities for

children to engage in discussion and direct work around their plans to leave the home. The registered person must ensure that plans reflect activities and opportunities for children to enjoy and achieve.	
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 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")—	12 June 2023

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)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that consequences are appropriate to the risk or behaviour and are recorded clearly. The registered person must ensure that positive behaviour strategies are recorded and that rewards are clear and appropriate for children's individual needs. The registered person must ensure that staff are aware of the strategies in place and that they are consistently used.	
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include 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))	12 June 2023
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.	12 June 2023

After completing a quality of care review, the registered person 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))

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff understand the potential risks to children from specific friendships and that appropriate steps are taken to protect a child where there are concerns for their safety. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.13)
- The registered person should ensure that all children have access to appropriate advocacy support, and where possible, this should be provided by a person that the child chooses. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.16)
- The registered person should ensure that children who are not participating in education are supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and are engaged in suitable structured activities while plans are implemented to resume education as soon as possible. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)

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: SC022464

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: PIC Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: 2 North Street, Haydock, St. Helens, Merseyside
WA11 0TW

Responsible individual: Mark Fletcher

Registered manager: Kellie Fletcher

Inspectors

Jenni Gadsby, Social Care Inspector
Sylvia Eboigbe, Regional Inspection Manager

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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