

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 children's home is owned by a private organisation.

The provider states in their statement of purpose that they provide care for children with EBD (social and emotional difficulties).

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 9 February 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on our website.

Inspection dates: 30 June to 1 July 2021

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 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: 7 August 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
07/08/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
30/05/2018	Full	Good
13/02/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
29/06/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

One child lives at this home. Her overall experiences and progress are compromised by poor safeguarding practice. Although the child's social worker feels that the child has made some progress from her individual starting point, the registered manager could not demonstrate the journey for the child or her progress, due to the poor recording systems.

The child does not attend formal education. The child has a tutor, but she struggles to engage with her lessons. The staff do not have effective strategies in place to ensure that the child consistently engages with her daily education timetable. This does not support the child to reach her full educational potential.

The child is not enabled to build trusted and secure relationships with all adults who are responsible for caring for her. The child told the inspector that she does not like living at the home and she wants to return to her home city. She described poor relationships with some staff members and told the inspector that there are 'always different staff' working at the home.

Observations of the child with a member of staff were positive. The member of staff was saying goodbye to the child and the child responded to a hug from her.

The child is not supported by all staff to learn acceptable behaviours and inappropriate language is left unchallenged. This does not support the child to learn how to treat others with respect or learn appropriate life skills.

The child has external support from child and adolescent mental health services; she told the inspector that this does not help her. Managers and staff have not considered any further support systems that may be available to help support the child.

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

Safeguarding practice in the home is reactive rather than proactive. Staff do not implement effective prevention strategies to reduce the risk of harm to the child.

The staff do not have adequate knowledge and understanding of risks to the child. The child has suffered harm and is at risk of further sexual exploitation as staff do not take appropriate action to keep her safe.

Staff are not alert to the potential signs of child criminal exploitation and the associated dangers. In the child's assessments, there are strategies in place to keep the child safe, including monitoring of the child's mobile phone. However, staff do not follow these strategies.

Furthermore, the registered manager does not effectively review strategies in the child's risk assessment to ensure that she is safe. For example, the child has barricaded herself in her bedroom on numerous occasions, and staff have been unable to prevent this from happening. This is a high risk for the child because she sometimes engages in self-injurious behaviour when she is alone in her bedroom. This has resulted in staff contacting the police on numerous occasions to intervene and ensure that the child is safe.

There is significant damage in the child's bedroom. The bedroom walls are bare, with damaged plaster, and the bedroom carpet is damaged. The child does not have any bedroom furniture. As a result, the child is not provided with a safe, homely and welcoming environment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The leaders and managers failed to demonstrate that they inspire and lead a culture that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential.

The registered manager is not leading and managing the home in a manner that is consistent with the aims outlined in the statement of purpose. She is not able to demonstrate that the care being provided in the home meets the individual needs of children or promotes their safety and welfare.

The registered manager does not review practice in the home effectively, and there are missed opportunities to understand the impact that the quality of care is having on the child. For example, when the registered manager reviews safeguarding incidents in the home, she does not implement the actions that she has identified. This failure to act means that she cannot make improvements to the care that staff provide for the child.

Training records for all staff, including agency staff, do not provide evidence that staff have had relevant training to meet the individual needs of the child. This is particularly in relation to self-injurious behaviour and ligature use. This is a risk to both the child and staff as incidents have not been managed safely.

Several agency staff work at the home, as shown in the rotas. The registered manager is addressing this with an agency, and she is trying to reduce the number of different staff that work at the home. However, the child currently experiences having too many different staff in the home and so does not benefit from a stable, consistent staff team.

Rotas do not include the hours that the registered manager works, in line with regulation.

There are delays in the manager notifying Ofsted of serious incidents in the home. This means that the regulator cannot effectively monitor incidents to ensure that the child is safe.

Internal and external monitoring systems are weak. The manager's monitoring and review reports do not include an analysis of her findings. Consequently, shortfalls in the care and protection provided for the child are not identified. This places the child at risk of harm.

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 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; 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; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iv)(x)) This is particularly in relation to ensuring that the child engages in structured education either informally or formally.	31 August 2021
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—	31 August 2021

that staff— 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; help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(v)(vi)) This is particularly in relation to helping the child use appropriate language with the staff.	
* 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; 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; 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; 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)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(b)(d))	15 August 2021

This is particularly in relation to ensuring that staff have effective risk management strategies to follow in practice, and that all staff consistently follow these to reduce the risk of harm to the child. The provider needs to ensure that the child's bedroom is safe and has all the items she needs.	
* 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 have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of 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)(c)(e)(f)(h)) The manager needs to ensure that she has oversight of any incidents within the home, to understand the impact of the quality of care provided to children. This is also in relation to ensuring that all staff have the relevant training to meet the child's individual needs. Furthermore, that the child receives care from a consistent staff team.	15 August 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)) The registered manager needs to ensure that she includes names and working hours on the staff rosters.	31 August 2021
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))	31 August 2021

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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

Inspector

Catherine Fargin, Social Care Inspector

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