

SC025420

Registered provider: Quality Protects Children 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. It is registered to provide care for up to six children with social and emotional difficulties.

Six children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The home is overseen by a qualified manager who has been registered with Ofsted since June 2019.

Inspection dates: 30 and 31 May 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 14 June 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/06/2022	Full	Good
16/12/2021	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
06/07/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
27/01/2020	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff spend time with children to build up trusting relationships. Children report that they have staff to talk to, and they feel they are listened to and helped. One child said, 'It's the best place I have ever lived.' Another child said, 'I can talk to staff if I am worried.' Observations of interactions during the inspection were positive and demonstrate that staff care about children.

Staff are ambitious for children. Children are accessing education and making positive progress. One child said, 'Staff helped me to access education. I am happy now that I am making progress.' Children who speak English as an additional language are making good progress in their communication. This promotes prospects for children.

All children are registered with relevant health services and attend appointments. Children are supported to take their medication in line with their health plans. However, one medication administration sheet was not updated to identify the new dose of medication for a child. This had no impact on the child as staff were administering the new dose but had not updated relevant paperwork.

Staff understand the importance of maintaining children's cultural and religious beliefs. Staff have formed links with local community groups relevant to a child's culture. Staff and children spend time together learning about each other's faith. Diversity is celebrated in the home.

Children have access to a range of activities, including boxing, football and cricket. Regular day trips are arranged for children. During the inspection, the children and staff team went on a trip to the beach, and lovely interactions were seen. Photos of special occasions are captured and kept in a memory book. This creates a sense of belonging for children.

Children are supported to maintain links with people who are important to them. When children do not have any contact with family members for a long time, staff support them to access appropriate services to locate family members. This supports children to maintain their identity. During the inspection, inspectors were able to observe one child being supported to spend time with their family. One family member said, '[Name of child] is well cared for, and staff are meeting his needs.'

One child has a court directed order in place. At times, to safeguard the child, some areas of the home are locked. However, an assessment is not in place to clarify when doors can be locked and what support is in place for the other children who live in the home. Children's social workers were aware of these arrangements.

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

Staff act when children are experiencing bullying. Two children were supported to move on from the home as they were unable to live with another child, who was the victim. A professional said, 'Staff were proactive. They managed the incident well and moved the other children.' They continued, 'They have the best interests of [name of child] at heart.'

Appropriate risk assessments are in place for each child. These are updated on a regular basis. However, records are not organised in a way that makes it easy to locate the most up-to-date and relevant records. This does not impact on children's safety.

Restraint is only used when required to safeguard a child. Records of incidents are clear and reviewed by the manager. Children are spoken to following incidents, and reflective sessions are completed. This supports children to understand why the restraint was used.

When children go missing from home, staff search for them, and children are provided with return home interviews. Staff do not always follow the procedure that is in place. On occasion, this has led to a delay in the police being notified. This has not been identified by the manager as part of their evaluation.

Some areas of the home have been modernised. However, the environment is not maintained to a high standard. Managers began to act during the inspection to improve some areas of the home, fixing minor areas of damage. However, the home requires redecoration to be brought up to an acceptable standard. Some areas of the home feel institutionalised because of the type of doors and locks.

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

The home is run by a qualified and experienced manager. Managers are ambitious for children and support them to make progress from their starting points. Staff work collaboratively to provide consistency of care to children.

Staff benefit from regular team meetings. These meetings are child-focused and provide learning opportunities. Staff discussed the ending of two of the children's placements to consider what they could have done differently. This demonstrates that staff are seeking to improve the experiences of children.

Staff receive training that is relevant to the individual needs of children. New staff receive a thorough induction. However, not all staff are on track to complete the relevant qualification in the required timescale.

Since the last inspection, a high number of shifts have been covered by agency staff. The manager has been provided with profiles for agency staff, but there are gaps in the manager's process for checking that all staff are safe to work with children.

The manager acts when allegations are made. Investigations take place, and the relevant professionals are contacted. Incidents are recorded, and children are informed about the outcome. The allegation policy does not identify what actions should be taken if an allegation is made against the manager. Consequently, the manager investigated an allegation made against them.

One child has a court directed order in place. At times, to safeguard the child, some areas of the home are locked. However, the registered manager has not completed an assessment to clarify when doors can be locked, the impact on the other children living in the home and what support is in place to manage this situation for all children.

Improvements have been made to the roster. However, it does not always provide a clear audit of staff on shift. This is particularly in relation to the hours that the registered manager works. A repeat requirement has been made for this area.

Leaders and managers have not taken sufficient action to address requirements from the last inspection. Therefore, some requirements are restated.

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 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 registered person to— 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; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(ii)(iii)(iv)(c)(i)) The registered person should ensure that a rigorous assessment is completed to identify why a child may have limited access to areas of the home. Social workers should be notified, and written consent should be obtained. The registered person should update the home to ensure that it is modern and suitable for the children living in the home.	23 August 2023
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.	23 August 2023

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; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; 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)(v)(vii)(b)) In particular, the registered manager should ensure that staff follow children’s plans when they are missing from home.	
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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1) (2)(c)(h)) This relates to the registered manager improving the internal monitoring of the home, for example ensuring that relevant, up-to-date risk assessments are on a child’s file and that medication administration sheets are updated when children change medication.	23 August 2023

The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. (Regulation 32 (1) (4)(a)(b)) This specifically relates to ensuring that staff complete the required qualification within timescales.	23 August 2023
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which— 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 records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response; The registered person must keep under review and, as necessary, revise the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 34 (1)(b) (2)(d) (6)) This relates to the registered manager ensuring that outcomes of allegations are recorded. The registered person should review the allegation management policy to identify what actions are to be taken should an allegation be made against the manager.	23 August 2023
The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; and ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37 (2)(a)(b))	23 August 2023

In particular, ensure that rosters include the full names of all staff and the actual hours worked.

This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.

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: SC025420

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Quality Protects Children Limited

Registered provider address: Hill House, Archway Road, Huyton, Liverpool L36 9XB

Responsible individual: Anthony Nolan

Registered manager: Mellissa Gittens

Inspectors

Kayleigh Treanor, Social Care Inspector
Mandy Williams, Social Care Inspector

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