

SC025657

Registered provider: Creating Care Choices Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately run and provides care for up to 11 children with learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities.

The home registered with Ofsted in 2001. The manager registered with Ofsted on 22 June 2022 and resigned on 20 April 2023.

There were seven children living in the home at the time of this inspection.

During the visit, the inspectors were aware that a serious incident was under investigation by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, the inspectors considered the actions the home has taken in response to the incident, alongside other relevant evidence available to them.

Inspection dates: 25 to 27 April 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **inadequate**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected and their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: 6 July 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/07/2022	Full	Good
09/02/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
10/02/2020	Full	Good
13/09/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Leaders and managers have failed to provide a safe and warm environment for children. The conditions of the home have significantly deteriorated since the last inspection. Inspectors found that some of the children's beds were broken and had unclean bedding with holes in. The communal areas of the home are tired and worn with damaged furniture and carpets with holes. The health and safety risks posed to children were rectified during the inspection. However, the home lacks warmth and comfort and is not a suitable environment for children to thrive.

Some children are showing signs of distress and regression. Some children have written messages on their bedroom walls that indicate that they are not happy in the home. Although all children have lived in the home for over one year, they mostly appear unsettled, and some have reverted back to past behaviours. This raises concerns about children's social and emotional well-being.

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that children's health plans progress. One child has not had their medication reviewed in over three years. As a result, staff are continuing to use medication without up-to-date guidance from health professionals. Leaders and managers demonstrate a lack of insight into the concerns about this or how to work with the professional network to ensure that children receive appropriate medical attention and review.

All children engage in education and are making good progress. Leaders and managers advocated for one child to get a place in a specific school that meets their needs. This child is making good progress.

Inspectors observed positive relationships between children and staff. Staff understand how children, including non-verbal children, communicate their needs. During the inspection, staff were seen to be playing with children.

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

Leaders and managers have failed to create a culture that promotes effective safeguarding practice. Staff report that they are scared to speak about their concerns for fear of repercussions from leaders and managers. This is a significant concern that places children at risk.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that important information about children is shared with the relevant parties. One social worker is concerned that staff did not inform them of a mark on a child and said that there are delays in them receiving information about incidents. One allegation against staff was not reported to the local authority designated officer or to Ofsted. Additionally, several significant

incidents were not reported to Ofsted as required. The lack of transparency limits the external oversight of the home.

Children's risk assessments and care plans lack important information and are not updated when circumstances change. This limits how well staff manage risk. For example, one child is currently in crisis, but there is no safety plan in place to support the child. Leaders and managers have failed to challenge the placing authority appropriately to ensure that the child's needs are met.

Staffing levels are a concern. Staff say they feel that the staffing levels at night are not safe to meet the complex health needs of children. Staff feel that if a serious incident occurs, children's safety could be compromised. Additionally, staff report that, until recently, there has not been enough staff on shifts to support the number of children in their care. As the staff rotas and signing-in book do not provide a consistent reflection of the staff on duty, inspectors were unable to determine how many staff have been on shift at a given time.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leaders and managers have not created a safe and supportive environment for staff or children. They have refused to accept the concerns raised at this inspection and minimised the concerning views of staff.

Leaders and managers do not prioritise the needs of children and consider the impact the home is having on the children. Consequently, the progress and experiences of children are poor and the outcomes for most children are not improved.

Leaders and managers do not prioritise the needs of the children or challenge placing authorities effectively. This has caused delay in some children receiving the support that they need.

Staff supervision and team meetings have taken place regularly. However, it is unclear how effective these activities are as staff feel unable to speak openly and honestly. Team meeting minutes show that staff were informed not speak to anybody outside of the home when whistleblowing was discussed. Consequently, safeguarding practice is compromised and staff morale and confidence are low.

Due to the concerns raised at this inspection, a notice restricting accommodation has been issued.

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 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; and 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)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that there are up-to-date risk assessments and safety plans in place for children when situations change so that staff are able to manage risk safely. Leaders and managers must ensure that there is a safeguarding culture that promotes children's	12 May 2023

safety and well-being. Leaders and managers must ensure that the home environment is safe for children.	
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 the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(d)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that they lead in a positive way that promotes the best outcomes for children. Leaders and managers must ensure that the number of staff on shift, day and night, is safe.	12 May 2023
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— 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; there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(c)(e))	12 May 2023
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each	12 May 2023

child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c))	
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— provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; provide to children personal items that are appropriate for their age and understanding; and ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(vii)(viii)(c)(i)(ii))	12 May 2023

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: SC025657

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Creating Care Choices Limited

Registered provider address: 38 Castle Drive, Ilford, Essex IG4 5AE

Responsible individual: Parmeswar Gopee Singh

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Leanne Grant, Social Care Inspector

Claire Beckingham, Social Care Inspector

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