

SC025664

Registered provider: Ownlife Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately run children's home. The home's statement of purpose states that it cares for up to three children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted in 2001. The home has not had a registered manager since May 2022. A new manager has been appointed but has not submitted an application to register with Ofsted.

At the time of this inspection, two children were living at the home.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 November 2022

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: 13 October 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/10/2021	Full	Good
12/03/2020	Full	Good
29/11/2018	Full	Good
19/02/2018	Interim	Not judged

Inspection judgements

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

Children generally build strong relationships with the staff who care for them. They speak positively about staff and are happy with the support they receive to help them to settle into the home. One child said, 'Staff here are better than the previous homes that I have lived in.' Another child told inspectors that they are settled and feel at home. However, some children's relationships with staff have been disrupted when staff have moved to work at other homes within the organisation. This weakens the continuity of and focus on children's care.

Children's educational attainment is varied. Staff take action to ensure that all children are registered at a school provision soon after they move into the home. Staff work closely with the school to ensure that personalised support plans are in place. This involves some children visiting the school and building relationships with their tutors before they start full-time education.

Children lack clear and consistent routines and boundaries and structure to their day. On the day of the inspection, staff allowed one child to remain in their bedroom, and did not provide the child with any food or drink until late in the day. The child did not go to school. This demonstrates that staff do not always provide children with appropriate care and support to meet their needs.

Staff encourage children to engage in health and well-being sessions to raise their awareness and understanding of issues such as safety awareness, friendship choices and risks relating to substance use. Leaders and managers ensure that children receive specialist health support when necessary. Staff also use key-work sessions to explore children's health needs and to ensure that arrangements are in place for them to attend relevant health appointments. This approach has helped to improve the health and well-being of some children.

Children are supported to maintain positive relationships with the people who are important to them. As a result, children are able to spend more quality time with their friends and family and their relationships are strengthened.

Children's views and wishes are listened to, and they are actively involved in influencing the day-to-day running of the home. One child helped to write the children's guide and has offered support to help new children to settle into the home. Children benefit from living in a comfortable and well-maintained home.

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

Compatibility assessments completed before children move into the home are poor. They do not always consider key information about children's known vulnerabilities

and the impact them moving into the home will have on children already living there. As a result, some children have moved out of the home as staff have been unable to meet their needs effectively.

Staff practices and responses to children who are missing from home are varied. Children do not always receive a well-coordinated response from staff. Staff do not always advocate for children to have an independent return home interview, to reveal information that could help protect children from the risk of going missing again, from risks they may have been exposed to while missing or from risk factors in their home.

Behaviour support plans do not provide staff with the strategies to help them to manage children's behaviour effectively. Consequently, staff do not always manage incidents swiftly or use de-escalation strategies to manage children's behaviour. The police are often called to help staff to manage behavioural incidents in the home. Furthermore, rewards and consequences are not used to support children to develop positive behaviour.

Safer recruitment practices are not always consistent and robust. One staff member's file does not contain evidence of all the required pre-employment checks to determine their suitability to work with children. The manager failed to ensure satisfactory references and background checks were obtained prior to a member of staff starting to work at the home.

Ofsted was not notified of an allegation a child made against a member of staff, as required by regulation. This breach in regulation limits the regulator's oversight of the home.

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

The leadership and management of the home are not stable. The home has not had a registered manager since May 2022. A new manager has been appointed but has not submitted an application to register with Ofsted. The instability in the leadership team impacts on management oversight and the consistency of staff practice.

The provider has not submitted their quality of care review to Ofsted, despite this being raised as a requirement at the last inspection. In addition, monthly monitoring visit reports completed by the independent person are of poor quality. Despite shortfalls being identified in the reports, recommendations have not been made to address these. Leaders and managers recognise the shortfalls in the independent monitoring of the home and have taken action to address this.

Staff say that they feel supported in their roles. The supervision records viewed during the inspection demonstrate that the individual needs and progress of children, practice issues and staff development are discussed at supervision. However, most staff, including the manager, do not receive regular supervision. The

lack of regular supervision limits management oversight of staff practice and undermines staff's learning and development.

Management oversight is weak and has failed to identify and address shortfalls in the home's records. Daily records lack sufficient information and do not offer insight into the daily experiences and progress of children. Furthermore, management oversight of serious incidents is not always evident. The limited management oversight undermines children's safety and welfare and the development of the home.

Staff do not routinely undertake training to meet the complex needs of the children in their care. For example, some staff have not completed training in safeguarding, restraint and first aid. The lack of sufficient training for staff limits their knowledge and understanding of safe and effective practice.

Despite the unstable management arrangements, leaders and managers continue to work proactively with other agencies. They review the quality of care, take on feedback from stakeholders and respond quickly when required. Feedback from external professionals is overwhelmingly positive.

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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and 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; 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; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children. (Regulation 11 (1)(b) (2)(a)(i)(v)(ix)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that children's behaviour support plans include strategies to help staff to manage children's behaviour and that staff promote positive behaviour.	22 December 2022
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—	22 December 2022

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; are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; that the home's day-to-day care is delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(vii)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all risks to children are assessed and effective strategies are in place to manage and reduce risk. They must also promote a strong safeguarding culture and ensure that staff receive appropriate training and support to help them to safeguard children effectively.	
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— 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)(f)(h)) In particular, leaders and managers must have strong and effective oversight of children's progress and experiences. They must also ensure that staff receive regular training and supervision to enable them to meet the needs of the children in their care effectively.	22 December 2022
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if—	22 December 2022

there is no registered manager in respect of the home. (Regulation 27 (1)(a))	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all safer recruitment checks for new staff are completed prior to them starting work at the home.	22 December 2022
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 any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(e))	22 December 2022
The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— HMCI. (Regulation 44 (7)(a))	22 December 2022
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.	22 December 2022

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.

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))

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are supported to contribute to and have a say in their support plans. When any child expresses unhappiness with support plans, a record of the child's response should be made. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.19)
- The registered person should ensure that the most up-to-date risk assessment and behaviour support plans for children are placed in their care files. ('Guide to

the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

- The registered person should ensure that children's written records evidence the progress that children have made since being placed at the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.4)

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: SC025664

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Ownlife Limited

Registered provider address: Legion House, 75 Lower Road, Kenley CR8 5NH

Responsible individual: David Hastings

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Maud Pipim-Addo, Social Care Inspector

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