

SC025664

Registered provider: Ownlife Limited

Assurance 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 and emotional 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 a full application to register with Ofsted.

The inspection was facilitated by the deputy manager and care director.

At the time of this inspection, one child was living in the home.

Inspection date: 28 February 2023

Date of last inspection: 15 November 2022

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The care of children

At the time of the inspection, one child was living at the home. One child recently moved on from the home. The inspector considered the experiences of both children that have lived in the home since the full inspection in November 2022. Children have good relationships with staff. One child told the inspector that he thinks this home is good, and he feels like staff respect him. The child that left the home has maintained contact with the home since leaving.

Children have made slow progress from their starting points. Staff encourage them to engage in education and life skills courses. However, not all children engage. Staff have persevered and tried to be creative and engage them in different ways to build their self-esteem and confidence.

Staff regularly speak to children about their emotional state and how they can best support them to develop a positive outlook. Staff understand children's mental health support needs, such as low mood. For example, children have enjoyed baking with staff. This time together has helped one child talk through a difficult life experience. However, staff do not always record children's views.

Children know how to complain. When they do, staff take their concerns seriously and deal sensitively with the issues raised. However, staff do not consistently record the outcome of complaints.

Children's rights are respected. Staff have ensured that the terms of a deprivation of liberty order for one child did not impact on the other child living in the home. However, children's views and their consent to room searches are not constantly recorded.

The safety of children

Historically, there has been an extremely high incidence of children going missing from the home. When this occurs, staff take prompt and effective action. This is in line with local missing persons protocols. Staff ensure that key professionals and parents are kept updated with developments. Staff maintain clear records of the action they take when children go missing from home, including keeping in regular contact with children when they are away. Children understand these protocols and respond to staff's attempts to contact them. This supports children's safe return home.

Staff's use of restraint is rare. Restraint is used as a last resort in order to protect children and others from harm. However, one record of restraint did not include the full record of discussion, and the information was not accurate.

Staff identify and assess risks posed to children. For example, there was good evidence of direct work undertaken to minimise the risks associated with driving a moped. However, this risk was not updated on the child's risk assessment. This has the potential to impact on safeguarding if all staff do not have access to an up-to-date assessment of risk.

Behaviour support plans do not provide staff with the strategies to help them proactively manage children's behaviour. For example, staff effectively managed the risk of a child bringing a knife into the home. However, behaviour support plans did not set out the strategies staff should use to prevent this from happening again.

Ofsted was not notified of a serious incident involving a child running out of the home with a knife and subsequently going missing from the home. This incident was managed well. However, the breach in regulations limits the regulator's oversight of the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

The delay in the current manager submitting an application to register with Ofsted has prevented the regulator from assessing the suitability of the manager. The home is fully staffed and there have been no staff recruited since the last inspection. Leaders and the manager have been proactive and engaged in a safer recruitment course.

Management arrangements have been strengthened in the home. The manager is supported by the deputy manager and care director. Leaders and managers have improved monitoring systems. The management oversight and evaluation of serious incidents are better demonstrated. However, the quality of some records requires further improvement.

Staff now benefit from regular supervision and say they feel supported. Regular supervision has improved the managers' understanding of staff's learning and developmental needs.

Staff have benefited from team development days and have engaged in training, such as safeguarding, restraint and first aid. This has helped to better equip staff to meet children's needs.

Leaders and managers advocate strongly for children and continue to work proactively with other agencies.

Leaders and managers have worked hard on their journey of improvement. However, one requirement raised at the last inspection has not been met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/11/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
13/10/2021	Full	Good
12/03/2020	Full	Good
29/11/2018	Full	Good

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; 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 should ensure that effective strategies are in place to minimise risks to children.	11 April 2023
A person may only manage a children's home if— the person is of integrity and good character; having regard to the size of the home, its statement of purpose, and the number and needs (including any needs arising from any disability) of the children— the person has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills to manage the home effectively and lead the care of children; and the person is physically and mentally fit to manage the home; and	28 March 2023

full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the person in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. For the purposes of paragraph (1)(b)(i), a person has the appropriate experience and qualification if the person has— within the last 5 years, worked for at least 2 years in a position relevant to the residential care of children; worked for at least one year in a role requiring the supervision and management of staff working in a care role; and by the relevant date, attained— the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 5 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered provider considers to be equivalent to the Level 5 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of a person who starts managing a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 3 years after the date on which that person started managing a home; or in the case of a person who was managing a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2017. The registered provider may defer the relevant date if the person— does not manage, or has not managed, a home for a prolonged period; or manages, or has managed, a home on a part-time basis. (Regulation 28 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(c) (2)(a)(b)(c)(i)(ii) (3)(a)(b) (4)(a)(b))	
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))	11 April 2023

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all children's case records (regulation 36) are kept up to date and reflect the child's wishes, feelings and views. This refers to ensuring full records are kept of room searches, children's views and the outcome of complaints. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- 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 full and accurate records of restraint are kept. This should enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge. The review should provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure it meets the needs of each child. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)

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

Jayshree Pillay, Social Care Inspector

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