

SC025812

Registered provider: McRae Residential Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home provides care for up to four children who may have emotional and/or social difficulties.

The manager, who is a qualified social worker, registered with Ofsted in June 2012. He does not have a leadership and management qualification.

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

Inspection dates: 30 November and 1 December 2022

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 failures that mean children and young people 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: 10 November 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/11/2021	Full	Good
19/02/2020	Full	Good
17/05/2018	Full	Good
05/07/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Serious shortfalls in safeguarding practice and leadership and management have compromised some children's welfare, safety and progress.

At the time of the inspection, a child who was supposed to be living at the home was staying with a relative. This arrangement was not authorised by the placing authority. The staff were in regular contact with the child and they were working collaboratively with the placing authority to encourage and support the child to return to the home.

Compatibility assessments do not consider key information about children's needs and vulnerabilities, or the potential impact that children may have on each other. In addition, these assessments do not evaluate if staff have the skills, experience and competence to meet all children's needs. When one child was placed at the home, staff were unable to meet their needs and keep them safe, which resulted in them being moved from the home in an unplanned way. This child did not have a positive experience of leaving the home and their stability and progress was negatively impacted.

Children's progress and experiences are variable. For some children, academic progress has been hindered by long periods of unauthorised absence from the home and increasing safeguarding concerns, such as going missing from home and involvement in gangs.

The home's plans for children are not updated to reflect any changes in the children's needs or the local authority's care plan. This is confusing for staff and potentially undermines the continuity of care provided to children.

One child is making some progress. For example, they are being supported to engage in their education and maintain positive relationships with their family. Some positive and meaningful work is being undertaken with this child, which is helping to improve their self-esteem and resilience.

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

Staff are not alert to all risks and do not take swift action when children's welfare is seriously compromised. For example, staff did not follow the home's missing-from-home protocol, the local authority care plan or a court deprivation of liberty order to prevent a child who was at risk of criminal exploitation from going missing from home. This child was placed at significant harm and there was very little evidence of staff acting to prevent this.

When serious incidents occur, staff do not update children's risk assessments to

ensure that they are current and effective. On one occasion, staff failed to report a very vulnerable child missing to the police, which further compromised the child's welfare and safety.

Staff's poor safeguarding practice is poorly managed. Leaders and managers do not help staff to understand their safeguarding roles and responsibilities or support them to reflect on and develop their practice. For example, when a member of staff failed to report a child missing from home, there was no evidence of any reflection or learning from this incident to prevent it from happening again.

Not all serious incidents are reported to Ofsted as required. This does not provide assurances that leaders, managers and staff fully understand their safeguarding roles and responsibilities or their statutory duties.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The home is led by a suitably experienced registered manager. He is also responsible for managing a sister home and his time is divided between the two homes.

A deputy manager oversees the day-to-day running of the home and her management responsibilities have increased since the last inspection. Although the deputy is experienced, she is still developing her management skills in children's residential care. There was very little evidence of the deputy manager receiving sufficient supervision, support and guidance to enable her to lead the home effectively.

Leaders and managers do not have a good enough understanding of the quality of the care provided at this home, or the impact that it is having on the children's experiences and progress. They do not ensure that improvements are sustained. Shortfalls in safeguarding practice identified at the last inspection continue.

Leaders and managers do not fully consider what training and support staff need to competently care for the children living at the home. As a result, staff are not adequately equipped to meet all children's needs, to identify and minimise risk and to keep all children safe.

Not all staff receive regular supervision, in particular the deputy manager. The supervision records viewed during the inspection were of poor quality and did not demonstrate any meaningful discussions about each child's needs, risk management or staff practice and development. As a result, weak practice is not being addressed and managers are missing opportunities to develop the staff team.

Following this inspection, two compliance notices were issued, under regulations 12 and 13, to address the serious shortfalls identified in safeguarding practice and leadership and management.

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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; 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)(ii)(iii)(vii)(b)) This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	8 January 2023
*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—	8 January 2023

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of 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)(c)(f)(h))	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home’s statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a))	8 January 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 any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(e))	8 January 2023

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendation

- 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)

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: SC025812

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: McRae Residential Care Services Limited

Registered provider address: 57 Lodge Road, Croydon CR0 2PH

Responsible individual: Kevin Henry

Registered manager: Paul Rhys-Taylor

Inspector

Maud Pipim-Addo, Social Care Inspector

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