

SC028599

Registered provider: Children and Family Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a private organisation and provides care for up to seven children with physical and/or learning disabilities. At the time of this inspection, seven children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2022.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 August 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
---	--

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
---	------------

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: 8 August 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/08/2023	Full	Good
10/05/2022	Full	Good
08/06/2021	Full	Good
16/05/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

The inspectors spoke with six children during the inspection. The children are settled and appear comfortable at the home. Although children have made some progress, significant concerns about the leadership and management of the home have affected the overall judgement.

There are codes on external doors to ensure children's safety. However, signed consent from social workers or parents for this safeguarding measure has not been obtained. One child is subject to a court order regarding restrictions. There is no copy of this order available at the home. Therefore, it is not clear what actions the order permits staff to take to ensure the child's safety.

The quality of the environment is mixed. There is an unpleasant odour in one child's bedroom. This means that the child does not have a positive environment to sleep in. A plastic door on a garden shed is broken, which could be a risk to the children due to sharp plastic edges. Children's bedrooms are personalised to their interests. Sensory activities around the two houses are accessible to children and make the corridors bright and child friendly.

Staff support children to participate in a range of activities. Children enjoy activities such as bowling, trampolining and arts and crafts. Some children have higher supervision levels in the community than when at the home. On occasion, staffing levels, while safe, limit the potential activities that can take place.

On occasion, there are conflicts between children living together in the home. When this occurs, staff do not always talk to the children afterwards. This is a missed opportunity to help children to develop peer relationships.

Staff promote children's relationships with their families. All children regularly spend time with family members. A family fun day was held for families to visit the children at the home. The children were able to have positive experiences with their families and staff members. Family members talk positively about the support provided to children.

Staff know the children well and know how to communicate with them. Staff know how children are feeling as they recognise their facial expressions and the sounds they make. Children are supported to develop their communication styles. All children are in education and making progress.

Staff support children's health. One child has increased their food intake and is less reliant on feeding tubes. They have put on weight since living at the home. Staff ensure that children have the equipment they need to support their health and mobility.

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

On the day of the inspection, an incident occurred where a child sustained an injury. Staff members were not following management advice around the supervision of the children during this time. Immediate medical attention was sought, and professionals were informed. Additional staffing was immediately implemented to ensure children's safety.

There are several areas where clear improvements are needed to ensure that children are receiving good enough help and protection. Although most of these issues have not had an impact, they have the clear potential to do so.

The arrangements around monitoring unexplained bruising are now effective. Leaders and managers have improved their system of communication with other professionals. The staff share body maps of unexplained marks or bruises with the manager. The manager shares these with the child's social worker, which enables external oversight of incidents. However, records do not always clearly capture the actions taken.

Some records of incidents are brief. There is limited description about the actions staff have taken during these times. Staff are not always curious about triggers to incidents, which means that they do not identify the reasons why they occur and subsequently implement strategies to address them. This means that similar incidents may occur.

Children's risk assessments are not always clear and up to date. The information about the number of staff needed to support one child during personal care is not up to date and suggests that more staff are required than necessary. There are not clear instructions about how to support a child's mobility when moving around the house to access all areas. This does not ensure that staff have clear guidance.

The home operates a no-restraint policy. However, on one occasion, a staff member used an untrained technique to hold a child during an incident. The manager has addressed this, and further training has been scheduled. The manager works well with the local authority designated officer and follows their guidance.

Children are supported to take appropriate risks. One child has developed their independence skills. Staff spend time supporting the child to understand risks and how to be more independent. As a result, they are now able to travel on the bus independently to visit their friends. The child also has access to the front door key code and manages this safely.

Staff support children to keep safe online and understand internet safety. Staff monitor online activity to help ensure that children are safe. When necessary, conversations take place with children to develop their ability to reduce online risks.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There is a lack of effective management oversight. Leaders and managers are aware the home has areas for development. They have identified some of these. However, limited actions have been put in place to address these.

There are not always records of actions taken by leaders and managers to explore incidents and concerns. The manager reports concerns to the appropriate authorities. However, the poor quality of some records and the absence of others has the clear potential to limit leaders' and managers' abilities to identify any trends or patterns.

Some documents are not accessible. Older records have been archived and could not be located during the inspection. This includes some body maps for children. Consequently, inspectors were unable to review records and look at actions taken, which limits their ability to review all information and documents since last inspection.

Safer recruitment processes are not consistently followed. Gaps in staff employment histories are not always explored. The company's policy for undertaking criminal records checks from other countries for staff who have lived overseas is not followed. There is an induction process for new staff, which helps them to learn their roles.

There is a lack of learning from incidents. Leaders and managers do not have a system in place to ensure that staff are informed about aspects of good or poor practice. This means that staff may not be able to develop their practice effectively.

Staff supervision sessions do not always take place in line with the home's policy. The supervision tracker is not up to date. This means that it is difficult for managers to monitor if staff have received supervision. When supervision sessions take place, these are not always reflective to support staff with their practice.

Leaders and managers do not always monitor the environment effectively. During the inspection, four fire doors were found not to close appropriately. Leaders and managers took immediate action to address this.

The independent person visits and produces a monthly report. However, there is a lack of consultation with children included in the reports. There is also a lack of feedback from other people, including families and staff members. This means that the independent person is not gaining a thorough insight into the home. A new independent person has been identified but is yet to visit the home.

The manager is qualified and dedicated to his role. He knows the children well and is aspirational for them. Professionals talk positively about the support offered. Professionals say that children have made progress. Staff talk positively about the support they receive.

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 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))	20 September 2024
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;	20 September 2024

manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; 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)(iii)(iv)(v)(vii)(b)) In particular, ensure that: staff follow management instructions; records clearly capture leaders' and managers' responses to incidents; children are given support and guidance to develop positive peer relationships; risk assessments and plans are clear and accurate.	
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b)) In particular, ensure that fire doors are regularly checked and that immediate action is taken when concerns about these are identified.	4 October 2024
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)) In particular, ensure that all records are sufficiently detailed and include actions taken by staff. Records must be accessible to those with a need to review them.	4 October 2024
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only—	20 September 2024

employ an individual to work at the children's 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) (3)(d))
In particular, ensure that any gaps in employment are explored and that the provider's policy in respect of overseas checks is adhered to.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing environment that meets children's needs. In particular, ensure that any maintenance issues or repairs needed at the home are promptly addressed. This specifically relates to the odour in a child's bedroom and the broken shed door. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that any child who is under continuous supervision and is not free to leave the home has consent in place for the external doors to be locked. Copies of any court orders regarding restrictions should be available at the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.63)
- The registered person should plan staffing levels to ensure that they meet the needs of children and can respond flexibly to unexpected events or opportunities. In particular, there should be adequate staffing to ensure that children can regularly go into the community. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.15)
- The registered person should ensure that there are systems in place so that all staff receive supervision that allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. The frequency of supervision should be in line with company policy. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that the reports by the independent person are rigorous and include views from the children and families, professionals and staff members. ('Guide to Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

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: SC028599

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Children and Family Services Limited

Registered provider address: Number 3 Siskin Drive, Middlemarch Business Park,
Coventry CV3 4FJ

Responsible individual: Adam Smith

Registered manager: Steven Chijota

Inspectors

Leanne Lyon, Social Care Inspector
Trudy Potter, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024