

# SC052744

Registered provider: Quality Protects Children Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to five children with learning disabilities. At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the home.

The registered manager post has been vacant since December 2024.

### Inspection dates: 21 and 22 January 2025

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| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b> | <b>inadequate</b> |
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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 and/or widespread 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:** 7 November 2023

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 07/11/2023      | Full            | Good                 |
| 06/12/2022      | Full            | Good                 |
| 26/04/2021      | Full            | Good                 |
| 09/07/2019      | Full            | Good                 |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate**

Since the last inspection, six children have moved on from the home. Two children moved on as staff could not keep them safe. Children's overall progress, safety and experiences are compromised by poor safeguarding practices and ineffective leadership and management oversight.

Care planning for children is poor. The previous registered manager had not sufficiently considered children's individual needs and the impact of the children living together. As a result, two children left the home after a short period of time.

Since the last inspection, children have made complaints about other children, saying they were scared. In an audit completed by senior managers they identified that one of the previous registered managers moved a child into the home outside the organisation's admissions policy and the home's statement of purpose. This does not demonstrate safe caring practices.

Parts of the home look worn and are damaged. The bedroom doors on the landing require painting and the hallway needs redecorating. Rubbish in the garden needs to be removed. Furthermore, not all children's bedrooms are currently habitable in line with the number of children the home is registered for. This does not provide a homely and comfortable environment for children to live in.

Children do not always benefit from a consistent staff team. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant turnover of staff. Several left with the previous registered manager. This means children do not receive care from a stable team of reliable staff who know them well.

Managers and staff do not consistently manage behaviour effectively. On occasions, they ignore children's inappropriate behaviours and language. This does not demonstrate that training provided to staff is effective and does not enable children to develop socially aware behaviour.

Children's educational progress is variable. The children living at the home are attending the on-site school and making progress. They are engaging well, taking part in the curriculum and outdoor learning opportunities. However, some children have not engaged with or attended education. Leaders, managers and staff do not always support children effectively to learn. This impacts on children's life chances and educational outcomes.

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

Managers and staff do not understand their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children. Due to children's complex needs, there are high staffing ratios in place.

However, staff do not always support children effectively in line with their plans. As a result, on one occasion, a child was able to leave the home without staff's knowledge. This left the child at risk of significant harm in the community.

The management of incidents is poor. Staff have not always locked the staff office. As a result, there have been incidents when children have gained access to the office where they have found lighters and screws. On one occasion, a child took a staff member's purse from the office and attempted to make online purchases using their bank cards.

Leaders and managers do not adequately respond to safeguarding incidents or implement safe strategies to consistently protect children. Following incidents of substance misuse, follow-up work has not always taken place with children to help them understand the dangers of alcohol and drug misuse. There is a lack of robust management oversight, with limited and conflicting strategies in place for the staff to manage and reduce risks to children.

Since the last inspection, there have been some medication errors. The previous registered manager did not ensure that action was taken to minimise further risks and failed to report these errors to the local authority designated officer. Furthermore, there were six occasions when children have not had the required doses of medication, due to managers and staff failing to ensure there was sufficient stock. The registered manager failed to address these significant shortfalls. This does not ensure that all children have access to medication to support their emotional health and well-being.

Recording systems are poor and lack accountability. Records of incidents are unclear and fail to provide the regulator with an accurate account of incidents. For example, during the inspection, leaders and managers were unable to locate several reports regarding incidents of missed medication, damage to property and physical aggression.

Not all staff have the skills to manage and de-escalate children's behaviour safely. Children said some staff were frightened of some children who previously lived in the home. As a result, the police were called to the home on several occasions to de-escalate incidents. This means that high-risk behaviours are not consistently addressed by staff.

Records of restraint practice are inadequate. Physical intervention records are not completed in line with regulation. Some records of restraint are missing, others are inaccurate and unclear. Following the use of restraint, some children and staff have not received an opportunity to take part in a debrief. This means children have not always been spoken to about the restraint measures used and given the chance to share any concerns they may have.

The management of allegations has been appropriate. Staff recently took part in a workshop on whistle-blowing procedures run by an external professional, to help them understand what action they need to take in the event of a child protection concern.

Safer recruitment practices are in place. Before starting work, staff are carefully vetted and appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that they are suitable. This ensures that children are cared for by adults who can care for them safely.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate**

Leaders and managers are not delivering care and support that is consistent with the aims outlined in the home's statement of purpose. They have not ensured staff understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe. Additionally, managers have failed to understand children's needs on admission to the home. This has had an adverse impact on children's safety and overall experiences.

Since the last inspection, two registered managers have left the home. As a result, management oversight has been poor. The previous managers have not always ensured that the quality of care provided to children was appropriately reviewed and evaluated.

The oversight, review and evaluation of incidents are poor. The home's recording systems are chaotic. As a result, it was difficult to find documents during the inspection. Additionally, gaps and inaccuracies in plans and records have not been identified by managers. There is no reflection or robust evaluation of safeguarding incidents to help improve practice.

The registered provider has recently appointed a new manager, who has completed a critical analysis of some incidents. He is working closely with the company's service manager to implement changes in the home's systems. They are working on developing their internal monitoring and reviewing systems. For example, the most recent review of care report does not contain feedback from children, staff or stakeholders. Leaders and managers are also in the process of recruiting a new independent visitor.

Staff receive supervision and attend team meetings. A recent audit completed by senior managers identified that several staff did not have the necessary training to meet the children's needs. Leaders took action to ensure that all staff have completed necessary training. Staff spoke positively about the new manager and feel well supported.

## 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         |
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| <p>*The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;</p> <p>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.;</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.<br/>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(d)(e)(f)(h))</p> | 23 February 2025 |
| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 7 March 2025     |

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| <p>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</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies;</p> <p>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.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(b))</p> |                  |
| <p>*The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home.</p> <p>In particular the registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>medicines kept in the home are stored in a secure place so as to prevent any child from having unsupervised access to them;</p> <p>medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child; and</p> <p>a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child.</p> <p>(Regulation 23 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                  | 23 February 2025 |
| <p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 7 March 2025     |

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| <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—</p> <p>meet the needs of each child.</p> <p>(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i))</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring the home is clean and free from damage. Flooring in the kitchen needs to be replaced and the hallway needs redecorating.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                     |
| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>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</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies;</p> <p>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.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(b))</p> | <p>7 March 2025</p> |

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| <p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>that arrangements are in place to—</p> <p>ensure the effective induction of each child into the home;</p> <p>manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and</p> <p>plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child’s placing authority;</p> <p>that each child’s relevant plans are followed.<br/>(Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(c))</p> | <p>7 March 2024</p> |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>the name of the child;</p> <p>details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure;</p> <p>the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>details of any methods used, or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p>7 March 2025</p> |

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| <p>the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;</p> <p>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and</p> <p>a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;</p> <p>within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.<br/>(Regulation 35 3(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring that all records of restraint are accurate, and include debriefs with children and evaluation by the manager of the measures used.</p> |              |
| <p>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.</p> <p>In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p> <p>the quality of care provided for children;</p> <p>the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and</p> <p>any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 7 March 2025 |

\*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

## **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:** SC052744

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Quality Protects Children Limited

**Registered provider address:** Hill House, Archway Road, Huyton, Liverpool L36 9XB

**Responsible individual:** Anthony Nolan

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Judith Birchall, Social Care Inspector

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