

SC053145

Registered provider: Partners in Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private organisation and provides care for up to three children. The home's statement of purpose states that staff provide a familial environment where children who cannot remain at home can be cared for in a way that allows them to experience a strong sense of nurture matched by clear boundaries and routines.

There is currently no registered manager in place.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 December 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 and 14 September 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

As a result of significant shortfalls at the last full inspection, the home was issued with four compliance notices under regulation 10 (the health and well-being standard), regulation 11 (the positive relationships standard), regulation 12 (the protection of children standard) and regulation 13 (the leadership and management

standard). In addition, the home is made subject to a restriction of accommodation for a period of 12 weeks inclusively.

A monitoring visit was undertaken on 1 November 2022. This visit concluded that insufficient steps had been taken to fully address the compliance notices. These notices were therefore reissued.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/09/2022	Full	Inadequate
08/07/2021	Full	Good
16/01/2020	Full	Good
19/03/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

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

Since the last full inspection, and subsequent monitoring visit, children have become more settled in the home. Daily routines are now in place which enable the children to understand the plans and expectations of each day. A staff member said, 'Things are much better. The children have been much calmer and there has been a nice atmosphere.'

Some progress has been made in securing appropriate education placements for children. One child's progress in construction has resulted in her being awarded second place at the House of Commons Young Builder of the Year Awards. Staff supported the child to attend the event.

However, there is a lack of progress in securing an appropriate placement for a second child, who has refused formal education for a period of two years. The local authority has failed to provide an up-to-date education, health and care plan and has failed to secure a school that will meet the needs of the child. The home provides a part-time programme of learning which consists of a tutor and equine training; however, the child's engagement in this learning is limited.

Children are supported to maintain contact with those who are important to them. Contact plans are in place and include the details of the supervisory requirements to support each planned contact.

Weekly recreation planners are in place and are now developed with the children. The children are encouraged by staff to try out new activities and experiences. However, the children do not consistently engage in the activities and continue to frequently challenge the agreed plans.

Healthcare plans are further developed. Children are registered with local health professionals and have attended routine appointments as required. Children with phobias pertaining to dental care are now in receipt of specialist services to enable dental treatment to be carried out.

Relationships between the children and staff have been strained. This is because the home has operated without a consistent and knowledgeable staff team. Since the last full inspection, the acting manager has secured some stability in the staff working at the home.

Children somewhat engage in discussions with their key workers about their plans, education and activities. Likewise, children have regular individual consultation sessions where they are encouraged to share their views, opinions and ideas about the home. However, children's engagement is superficial and is focused on incentives and rewards.

Children do not review their plans or the work carried out with them. Children say, 'We didn't need to do it before so why should we do it now?'

The implementation of some required changes has proven difficult to deliver in this home. Changes that relate to behaviour management, education and daily expectations are frequently challenged by one child. Consequently, the home has yet to develop a consistent and strong approach to the care and management of children.

Since the monitoring visit, the interior of the home has been repainted and the boarded windows have been reglazed. The home presents as warm and welcoming with lots of Christmas decorations and a Christmas tree lighting up the living room.

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

Risk assessments are further developed. Assessments now take account of the children's lived experiences and how these experiences serve to impact on the children. The company psychologist works alongside the children and staff to formulate individual strategies to manage children's challenges and difficulties. Assessments are reviewed in two-weekly team meetings and are updated where appropriate.

Since the last full inspection, there have been no incidents of children needing to be held to keep them safe or incidents where children have been missing from the home.

Behaviour management plans are in place and are linked to children's individual risk assessments. Each plan details the potential triggers for children's behaviours and challenges and the agreed strategies to manage these incidents. However, behaviour management plans are not consistently adhered to. This is because the children have not yet adapted to the changes in the management of their behaviours and frequently respond negatively and/or aggressively to staff who attempt to implement the changes.

Children understand how to make a complaint. They are provided with details for making an internal complaint and contact numbers if they prefer to make a complaint independently of the home. Children making allegations against staff have their concerns appropriately assessed by the local authority designated officer and investigated where required.

It is acknowledged that the acting manager has taken steps to improve the systems and processes in place to protect the children. However, these changes are in their infancy. Children are not yet fully engaged in these changes and therefore do not benefit from the positive changes available to them.

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

The home is currently managed by an acting manager. An application to register a permanent manager has not yet been received by Ofsted. The organisation must ensure that any person making an application for registration complies with the requirements of regulation 28 of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015.

The home is operating without a full staff team. Staff changes have had a negative effect on children's ability to build trusting relationships with the adults caring for them. A recruitment drive has taken place and new staff have been identified to join the team. However, the new team will require a full induction and training before commencing their employment at this home.

Records of staff training highlight that not all staff are up to date with mandatory training, and other identified training has lapsed.

Although the staff are supported through regular team meetings, they are not provided with consistent supervision. This is because the acting manager does not have the support of a deputy manager or senior team member. Consequently, individual supervision of staff has lapsed.

Systems for the internal monitoring of the home have improved. The acting manager reviews the quality and consistency of care being provided in the home and the steps required to further develop the service.

This home was judged as inadequate at the last full inspection. The acting manager and staff have worked hard to address the shortfalls in practice. However, as the changes are in their infancy and require time to embed, the benefits of these changes cannot be fully assessed at this time.

The area manager and the acting manager do not plan to admit any further children into the home until they are satisfied that the ongoing shortfalls are fully addressed.

A case review held on 9 December 2022 concluded that sufficient action has been taken to address the steps in the compliance notices. Furthermore, the restriction of accommodation has now ceased.

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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement; raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child's education or training provider and the child's placing authority;	6 January 2023

help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans; and that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(ix)(x)(b))	
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; promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— 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; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(e)(f))	6 January 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—	6 January 2023

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

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 ensure that all employees—

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undertake appropriate continuing professional development;

receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and

have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year.
(Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c))

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that expectations of standards of behaviour are high for all children in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.11)
- The registered person should ensure that children are actively encouraged to read their records and to add further information to them. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.6)
- The registered person should ensure that the home has sufficient staff, including someone in a management role, on duty to meet the assessed needs of the children in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 51, paragraph 10.1)

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: SC053145

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Partners in Care Limited

Registered provider address: 2 The Calls, Leeds LS2 7JU

Responsible individual: Krysia Watson

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Maria McGranaghan, Social Care Inspector

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