

SC055153

Registered provider: Thunderbolt Mobile Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This service is owned by a private organisation that provides activity-based intervention for children who may be experiencing a period of difficulty or crisis.

Up to three individual placements for children are provided. At the time of the inspection, two children were accessing this service, one of whom was admitted during the inspection.

Placements are usually short term, and they are activity-based, such as with trips on a barge or in a camping pod. A planned yet flexible programme designed to meet children's individual needs and circumstances is agreed with placing authorities.

The organisation offers an education service and therapeutic support from an external contractor.

There is currently no registered manager in post.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 17 November 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/11/2021	Full	Good
14/01/2020	Full	Requires improvement to be good
06/11/2018	Full	Good
13/11/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from a flexible package of support that is responsive to their individual needs and circumstances. Working to a 12-week programme, children are provided with a range of activities that are designed to give them a positive break from chaotic lifestyles and risk-taking behaviour. The effectiveness of this approach is evident in the number of children that have regained control over their lives and moved on successfully to more permanent placements.

Staff are skilled at forming strong relationships with children quickly. They use these effectively to help children explore past behaviours and experiences and change their thinking. One child said, 'It is great being here. Staff have helped me to think about how I can sort things out and be a better person.'

Supporting children to rebuild and improve relationships with the important people in their lives is an essential part of this programme. Staff work closely with parents and carers and ensure that they are fully involved in care planning. A professional wrote, '[Name of child] was supported in all aspects of his care. The staff promoted family time and advocated for [name of child] to have more time at home with his friends.' She also wrote, '[Name of child] stated that he felt part of a family while he was there, which is a huge endorsement for the staff.'

Children with poor education attendance are encouraged and supported to re-engage in learning. Staff work closely with tutors from the organisation's school to promote a bespoke package of learning support for each child. As a result, children's attendance improves, and they begin to make progress relative to their individual starting points.

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

Well-thought-out strategies of support are used to help children stay safe. Initially, these are based on high levels of supervision underpinned by an educational approach. Staff are good at engaging children in reflective conversations and direct work that enable them to reflect on past behaviours and make better choices going forward. As a result, children are demonstrably safer because behaviours such as going missing from home and being at risk of exploitation reduce significantly.

Multi-agency responses ensure that incidents of children going missing from care are managed effectively. Although infrequent, some missing-from-care episodes have spanned over several days. Staff are proactive in their efforts to locate and return the child as quickly as possible, sometimes going to great lengths to do this.

Staff act as positive role models and take a patient and tolerant approach to behaviour management. Praise and rewards are used well, and consequences, when used, are proportionate and fair. Physical restraint is infrequent and is always only

used as a last resort. Of the four incidents since the last inspection, the police have been required on two occasions. The manager has failed to notify Ofsted of these incidents.

Restraint records are of an acceptable quality. However, the manager was unable to provide evidence that the debriefs for children or staff had taken place.

Furthermore, the management evaluation of these incidents is not always done within regulatory timescales.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is well run by an experienced manager who is in the process of registering with Ofsted. He is ambitious and passionate about improving the lives of the children, which is a value that is shared by his staff team.

The registered address for the service is a business address and cannot accommodate children. Recognising the limitations of this arrangement, the organisation has recently acquired a property that can accommodate children. Plans are in place to move children, the manager and staff soon. This will provide a more permanent base from which to operate.

The children benefit from the care of an experienced and settled staff team. The manager recognises the qualities of his team, and staff are competent in their role. Induction and supervision are used effectively to maximise staff development and potential. This is strengthened by a range of mandatory and needs-led training that helps to ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to carry out their roles well.

The manager has a good understanding of the home's strengths and recognises where improvements need to be made. A recent audit has identified areas for improvement, which include reorganising records to ensure that they are easily accessible. The manager is in the process of addressing this shortfall.

The manager maintains good oversight of staff practice, care planning and children's progress. The biannual quality of care review is detailed and clearly focused on an improvement agenda. However, children's views are not yet routinely captured as part of this process.

Suitable action has been taken to address two of the requirements and all the recommendations from the last inspection. However, despite the improved efforts of the independent visitor, there continues to be an absence of consultation with parents and, to a lesser extent, children and staff.

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 registered person must ensure that— 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— the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; 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")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and 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. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	12 April 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. (Regulation 40 (4)(b))	12 April 2023
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—	12 April 2023

if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a))	
In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it. (Regulation 45 (2)(b))	12 April 2023

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: SC055153

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Thunderbolt Mobile Limited

Registered provider address: 158/160 Birkrig, Digmoor Parade, Skelmersdale, Lancashire WN8 9HP

Responsible individual: Michael Fletcher

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Paul Scott, Social Care Inspector

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