

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 up to three children who may be experiencing a period of difficulty or crisis.

At the time of the inspection, two children were accessing the service using Pride, a broad beam boat and Tenacity, a house.

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

There is currently no registered manager in post.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 March 2024

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: 7 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/03/2023	Full	Good
17/11/2021	Full	Good
14/01/2020	Full	Requires improvement to be good
06/11/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have positive and trusting relationships with staff who treat them with dignity and respect. Staff spoke fondly and passionately about the children.

Staff support the children to make positive progress from their starting points. With help from the staff and input from the therapy team, one child has built the skills to make significant changes to their emotional wellbeing and has seen a significant reduction in their involvement in crime. There is a clear programme in place to meet the children's individual needs and to support them to move onto more permanent homes or to move back to the care of their families.

Children have access to a wide variety of activities due to the nature of the service provided. Staff make sure that activities are provided to meet the child's social and academic needs as well as their hobbies and interests. They are supported to learn new skills and to enhance their independence to support them to move successfully into adulthood.

Staff make sure that children have the opportunity to express their views and contribute to their day-to-day decisions. They are supported to understand decisions made about their futures and independent advocates are available to ensure that their voices are heard.

Staff support children to attend education. Attendance has improved significantly for both children since living at the home. One child is due to sit their GCSEs and both children have aspirations to attend college courses relevant to their chosen careers.

Staff support the children to enjoy time with their family and friends. They support children to travel, often long distances, to ensure that they can maintain relationships that are important to them. When there have been difficulties with family time staff have worked with placing authorities make ensure that children can still spend time with family safely.

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

The manager and staff place the children's welfare at the centre of their practice. Children spoken to during the inspection said that if they have any worries they can talk to staff and they will listen to them.

Care plans and risk assessments are detailed documents which give clear guidance and strategies for staff to ensure that there is a consistent response to children. However, not all risks detailed within the plans are relevant for the individual child and some strategies within the plans are generic. Plans would benefit from being personalised for the child's individual needs and risks.

There have been no safeguarding concerns, disclosures or allegations since the last inspection. Staff spoken to during the inspection were able to explain the processes they would follow should an issue arise.

There has been one occasion when it was necessary to physically hold a child to keep them safe. It was reasonable and proportionate and suitably recorded. After the incident the child and staff involved were given the opportunity to discuss and understand what had happened and to talk about their feelings about the hold.

Incidents and significant events are recorded. The manager has oversight of these documents, however, his comments on these documents do not clearly reflect on staff practice. There has been one occasion when a child has been missing from the home. The report does not include the actions staff took to locate the child or how the steps they took to ensure that the child returned safely to the home.

There is appropriate planning in place for children who are new to the home, this could be strengthened by ensuring that staff training, skills and experience are considered in assessments undertaken when deciding if the staff team can meet the needs of individual children.

Suitable health and safety measures are in place to ensure that properties used are safe and meet the needs of the children. However, there is an issue with damp and mould in the kitchen and near the front entrance of the home which needs addressing as a matter of urgency.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There is an experienced manager in post who has submitted their application to register with Ofsted. Staff spoken to during the inspection reported that they feel supported by the manager and that he is always available when needed.

The manager makes use of external monitoring processes and also has suitable systems in place to ensure that he has oversight of the home and is able to identify strengths and areas for development. The manager has an in-depth understanding of the children's needs and knows them well.

There is an experienced and stable staff team who are qualified and trained in mandatory subjects. However, there are some shortfalls in training to meet the children's individual needs. Not all staff are trained in county lines, e-safety, trauma and attachment and substance misuse. No staff have bereavement training despite one child needing support in this area.

Staff receive regular, practice-based supervisions which are completed by the manager or deputy manager. In addition to this staff also have their fitness to complete their roles appraised annually. Team meetings take place regularly and are a good opportunity for staff to get together and to share information and updates about the children.

The manager and staff work in partnership with external professionals. When it has been necessary, the manager has challenged professionals to make sure that everyone is working for the best interest of the children which has promoted positive outcomes for children.

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 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; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(vi)(vii)) Specifically, staff must take effective action when a child is missing from the home to locate them and support them to return home as quickly as possible.	14 March 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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(d))	27 March 2024

Specifically, the registered person must ensure that the issues with damp in the kitchen and the entrance hallway are resolved as quickly as possible.	
In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (2)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must make sure that staff are trained in areas to meet the children’s individual needs including county lines, e-safety, trauma and attachment, substance misuse and bereavement.	27 March 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Specifically, the registered person should ensure that children’s plans are clear, directive and bespoke to each child’s individual needs and behaviours. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure there are procedures in place for welcoming and introducing each child to the home, and that they are sensitive to the needs of the child at the time of arrival. Impact assessments should detail whether staff have the skills, experience and training to meet the child’s individual needs. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 57, paragraph 11.7)
- The registered person should ensure that when reviewing incidents they reflect on staff practice and ensure that good practice is sustained. Managers oversight of significant events should be clear and evaluative. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 54, paragraph 10.24)

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

Katie Tomlinson, Social Care Inspector

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