

SC061678

Registered provider: Care Assist Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to four children who may have emotional or behavioural needs.

The home is owned and operated by a private provider.

There is a manager in post who registered with Ofsted in July 2014.
At the time of the inspection, there was one child living in the home.

Inspection dates: 7 to 8 December 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **inadequate**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor, and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 24 August 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: Inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

Following an inadequate inspection in August 2021, two compliance notices were issued in respect of regulation 12 and regulation 13.

At the monitoring visit in October 2021 these notices were monitored and found to be unmet and two further notices were issued. A notice restricting accommodation

at a children's home was issued under section 22B of the Care Standards Act 2000. This notice was issued with immediate effect from the 22 October 2021 until the 13 January 2022.

During this full inspection, the compliance notices were monitored and found to be unmet.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/08/2021	Full	Inadequate
12/12/2019	Full	Good
16/01/2019	Full	Good
15/12/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Progress for children is limited by ineffective care planning. Some children benefit from external agency support. However, for some children, their significant needs have not been addressed. For example, one child has a neurodevelopmental disorder; however, staff have not received training to develop their understanding of how this may affect the child's day-to-day life.

Children are not being supported adequately to prepare for independence. Children are gaining some independence skills; however, staff are not following a comprehensive independence plan which means that not all of their needs are being addressed. For example, budgeting skills were identified in local authority plans but these had not been addressed.

One child has shown good commitment to a training programme which has enabled them to gain employability skills.

Weaknesses in transition planning have meant that some children have had a negative experience when leaving the home. For example, one child was not told that their placement had ended until after the fact, and one child did not receive appropriate practical support to help them move out.

One child spoken to, felt supported by the staff in the home and felt that they could talk to staff about worries or concerns. The child is supported to see people who are important to them, and one professional commended staff for supporting positive family relationships.

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

Actions taken in response to safeguarding incidents have not been effective. There is limited oversight of, or reflection on, significant events, and actions taken to safeguard children and prevent incidents reoccurring are limited. Therefore, children remain at risk of harm.

Children remain at risk, due to smoking in their rooms, because staff are not taking effective action. Furthermore, there has been no meaningful work with children about smoking and associated fire hazards, which does not develop their understanding or help them to keep safe.

There has been a reduction in the number of incidents when children have been missing from the home. When children are missing, staff inform appropriate agencies and try to contact the children. However, when children return, records do not demonstrate that staff are taking action to ascertain their well-being.

Despite a recommendation made at the last inspection, sanctions are still not restorative in nature and do not help children to understand the impact of their behaviours. Sanctions are not well recorded or effectively reviewed, and some sanctions have been repeated with no positive impact on behaviour.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There is a manager in post who registered with Ofsted in 2014. Staff feel that the manager and deputy manager provide a supportive environment.

Some staff have regular supervision that they find beneficial. However, one new member of staff did not receive supervision in line with the home's own policy. This does not support the development of good practice.

The registered manager has missed opportunities to identify and address shortfalls in practice. Furthermore, they do not have a clear overview of significant events and have failed to identify any potential learning to improve practice in the home.

Failure to monitor standards effectively, or take action when concerns are identified, means that poor practice and poor standards of care continue, and children are not benefiting from an improving service.

The manager has not ensured that plans for children comprehensively identify their needs. Behaviour support plans for children are under review; however, current placement plans for children are not informed by relevant health and education assessments.

There are some positive examples of partnership working, and one professional said that the home is good at keeping them up to date with important issues. However, in some cases, the manager has failed to challenge external services sufficiently which has affected the quality of care for some children.

Training for staff remains incomplete in some subjects which are relevant to the needs of children living at the home. This means that in some areas, staff lack the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of children.

The manager has not notified Ofsted of a significant event. This does not support effective monitoring and therefore compromises children's welfare and safety.

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c))	27 January 2022
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and 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, that each child's relevant plans are followed.	27 January 2022

(Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(ii)(iii)(c))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))	27 January 2022
*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. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i))	27 January 2022
*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 their full potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))	27 January 2022

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff record information on individual young people in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion, and third-party information. Information about young people should always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to them now or in the future. In particular

in key-worker records and young people's healthcare plans. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

- The registered person should ensure that all sanctions are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and proportionate and that they are relevant and restorative in nature. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards, page 46, paragraph 9.36)

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: SC061678

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care Assist Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: 1 High Barn, Back Lane, Aughton, Ormskirk,
Lancashire L39 6SX

Responsible individual: Peter Jones

Registered manager: Edward Adams

Inspectors

Emma Thornton, Social Care Inspector
Chris Scully, Social Care Inspector

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