

# SC061678

Registered provider: Care Assist Children's Services Limited

Monitoring visit

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 and/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.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on the 24 August 2021, to carry out a full inspection. The report is published on Ofsted's website.

**Inspection date:** 20 October 2021

## **This monitoring visit**

A full inspection was carried out on 24 August 2021. During this inspection, significant concerns were identified in relation to the leadership and management of the home and safeguarding practice. Inspectors carried out a monitoring visit on 20 October 2021 and found that the compliance notices have not been met and that the previously identified concerns remain.

Children's assessments do not clearly identify some known risks to children's safety and well-being. For example, following a significant incident involving two children placed at the home, children's risk management plans were not updated to reflect what steps must be taken to reduce the risks and prevent a reoccurrence of this incident.

Strategies in children's risk management plans are not consistently followed. Inspectors found that staff were not adhering to children's risk assessments in

relation to room searches and smoking in their bedrooms. Direct work sessions have failed to address specific concerns with the children. Ultimately, children's behaviour is not changing, and this places the children at risk of harm.

Serious concerns were identified about the safety and quality of the environment during the inspection in August. Some steps to address repairs in the home have been taken, but the standards in the home still do not promote children's welfare.

Furthermore, the standard of cleanliness in some communal areas does not support children's good health or well-being. For example, the bathroom blind showed stains that were consistent with previous mould issues, and the grout and seal in the bathroom and shower room were considerably marked.

Furniture in two of the children's bedrooms is damaged, including a missing desk drawer and missing handles on a chest of drawers. This is not conducive to a warm welcoming environment, and has an impact on the safety and well-being of children.

Staff rotas have been revised to allow the registered manager to have one day a week when he is not caring for children, in order to carry out managerial tasks. However, monitoring by the registered manager remains ineffective. For example, children's plans lack oversight and are not signed by the manager, and incident records are not evaluated by the manager and do not include clear information regarding the actions taken to prevent incidents from reoccurring. Records of sanctions and records of missing-from-care episodes lack managerial oversight. Ultimately, there are missed opportunities to identify and address shortfalls in practice.

In addition, the registered manager and deputy are often on shift together. This means that there is no management oversight of the home for a significant part of the week because neither of them are on shift. At this monitoring visit, the inspectors found that the two previous compliance notices had not been met. On 22 October 2021 two more notices under regulation 12 and 13 were issued along with a restriction of accommodation notice to ensure that the home does not take any further placements.

## 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                 |

## 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        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <p>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs;</p> <p>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))</p>                                                 | 3 December 2021 |
| <p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;</p> | 3 December 2021 |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                        |
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| <p>help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment;</p> <p>help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible;</p> <p>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;<br/>(Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(viii)(ix))</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>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.<br/>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(d))</p> | <p>3 December 2021</p> |
| <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>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.<br/>(Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(d)(h))</p>                                                                                                                                     | <p>3 December 2021</p> |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <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 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.<br/>(Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(i)(ii)(iii))</p>                                                    | <p>3 December 2021</p> |
| <p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation;</p> <p>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;</p> <p>a child protection enquiry involving a child—</p> <p>is instigated; or</p> <p>concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.<br/>(Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))</p> | <p>3 December 2021</p> |

\*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

## **Recommendations**

- The registered person should ensure that staff record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about children should always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to them now or in the future. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraphs 14.4 and 14.5) In particular key-worker records and children's healthcare plans.
- The registered person should ensure that their review of the service is used to enable the registered manager to identify areas of strength and possible weakness in the home's care, which should be captured in the written report. The report should clearly identify any actions that need to be taken in the next 6 months and how these actions will be implemented. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)
- Staff should have clear guidance on how to respond to each child's individual behaviour to enable them to manage conflict, maintain constructive dialogues and react appropriately and consistently if challenged by a child in their care. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.14)
- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should ensure that all sanctions are scrutinised thoroughly and regularly in order to make certain 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**

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

## **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**

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

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