

SC062013

Registered provider: After Care (North West) Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately operated children's home. The home is registered to provide care for up to three children who may have complex needs, including social and emotional difficulties.

There were two children living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The registered manager left in September 2024, and an acting manager is in post who has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 18 February 2025

Date of last inspection: 29 October 2024

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspectors evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

Inspectors identified serious and widespread concerns in the protection of children and the leadership and management of the home.

There has been one incident where a child was restrained inappropriately. The record of this incident did not accurately reflect what had happened. There was a delay in the on-call manager being informed of safeguarding concerns and the on-call manager failed to explore the information when it was initially provided by staff. Children were unduly left at risk because of the delays.

Once managers and leaders were fully aware of the concerns, they acted appropriately to safeguard the children and investigate thoroughly. The managers within the organisation identified the shortfall within the on-call system and addressed this swiftly. However, the interim manager has not addressed staff practice shortfalls within the home.

Staff fail to record incidents with detail and the manager does not have the information to evaluate staff practice. Other records contain conflicting information. Some records are completed a significant time after the event, and some are missing in their entirety. Children and staff are not routinely spoken to after significant incidents to gain their views. The manager's oversight has not recognised the shortfalls and inaccuracies in recording and reporting in the home.

Many of the staff team are new to the home. The manager provides regular supervision. However, the supervision is not reflective, and lacks focus on staff development.

The manager is supported by the responsible individual and other senior leaders. However, the support is mainly virtual and the senior leaders have little presence in the home. The manager attends a weekly reflective meeting with the other managers within the organisation and receives regular supervision. However, this is not at the frequency as stipulated by the responsible individual and it does not address the manager's development needs.

Children stay in the home a long time and have been supported to re-engage with education since the last inspection. Children have positive relationships with staff and each other. Staff support children to engage in their interests and local community. Children are settled in their home and surrounding area.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/10/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
12/04/2023	Full	Good
26/04/2022	Full	Good
30/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; 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)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)) Specifically, that staff should show how to respond to any safeguarding concerns in the home and act promptly to safeguard children. The registered should address any shortfalls in staff practice thoroughly and swiftly.	06 April 2025
*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; and	06 April 2025

promotes their welfare. 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; 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(f)(g)(ii)(h)) Specifically, the registered person should ensure that there are robust systems of oversight that enable them to recognise and address shortfalls in practice and recording. The registered person should ensure that recordings are of good quality and completed in a timely way. This includes recordings in relation to incidents, accidents, allegations, complaints, and consequences. Children should be enabled to contribute their views to these records, to enable the provider to learn from the child’s experience. This requirement has been restated.	
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 name of the child; details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure;	06 April 2025

a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result 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)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) This requirement has been restated.	
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and	06 April 2025

any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.

After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review (“the quality of care review report”).

The registered person must—

supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and

make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home.

The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.
(Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5))

This requirement has been restated.

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC062013

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: After Care (North West) Limited

Registered provider address: 45 Kensington Road, Southport PR9 0RT

Responsible individual: Timothy Blundell

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Sarah Huntbatch, Social Care Inspector
Renee Sims, Social Care Inspector

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