

SC062248

Registered provider: Quality Protects Children Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care for up to four children who may have social and emotional difficulties and/or a learning disability. There is day school in the grounds of the home. The inspector only inspected the social care provision on this site.

At the time of this inspection, there were two children living in the home.

The registered manager post is vacant.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 June 2023

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 failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 13 February 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/02/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/04/2021	Full	Good
26/06/2019	Full	Good
25/07/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Managers and staff are not delivering good-quality care in line with children's complex needs and plans. Furthermore, poor safeguarding practice and ineffective leadership and management of the home are having a significant effect on children's experiences and progress.

Children have access to a full-time education programme at a registered school, operated by the same provider and located in the grounds of the home. However, inconsistent boundaries and routines for children are limiting their progress and engagement in education.

Children attend routine medical appointments. Although the company provides in-house therapeutic services, children are not engaging with these services. Children receive help and advice in relation to the dangers of using e-cigarettes. However, they are openly using e-cigarettes in the home. Staff have not taken sufficient action to determine how children obtain these harmful items, in order to take appropriate preventative action.

Children live in a spacious home which is set in large grounds. Although there has been some recent investment in pictures for the home, the poor standards of decoration and hygiene detract from the homeliness of the environment. There are issues with ventilation in some areas of the home which have contributed to concerns about damp and visible mould. Leaders and the manager have failed to address these concerns, which present an avoidable hazard to children's health.

There is a separate annex to the home with a living space and bedroom for a child. A child's pet rabbits are currently housed in the annex. There were empty rabbit hutches and a discarded bed frame in the annex, which means that this space is not suitable for a child to move into.

Children are encouraged to explore activities and pursue hobbies. They benefit from a variety of experiences which they enjoy.

Children told the inspector that staff listen to them. The manager and staff consult with children regularly to gather their views, wishes and feelings. When children make suggestions or requests, there is evidence that the manager considers these carefully and reports back to children with any action that will be taken.

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

Managers and staff do not take effective action to safeguard children when they are missing from the home. Staff practice is not scrutinised or challenged by managers.

Therefore, ineffective and unsafe practice has continued, which has placed children at risk of harm.

Children have left the home late at night and in the early hours of the morning. On two occasions, staff did not know that children had left the home. Despite the significant risks to children's safety, there was no reflection on the circumstances leading to these incidents and this led to delays in implementing robust plans to protect children from these risks. In addition, when children are missing from the home, staff do not take consistent action to look for them or contact family and friends to try and find them.

Children are at risk of harm due to poor practice in relation to the assessment and management of risk. Risk management plans lack clarity about the risks to children. Managers are failing to provide staff with sufficiently clear information to enable them to manage children's risks and vulnerabilities safely and effectively.

When a child recently made an allegation about a staff member, this was not responded to appropriately. Leaders and managers failed to share this allegation with relevant safeguarding agencies, in order to allow a thorough and timely investigation to take place into the concern.

Leaders and managers have not shared sufficient information with placing authorities about the risks to children who live in the home. This poor practice has prevented a robust multi-agency response to manage and reduce the risks to children.

Staff do not understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe. Although they have received training in some key areas, they do not have sufficient knowledge about children's individual risks. This lack of knowledge about children undermines the effectiveness of their training.

Positive behaviour in the home is not consistently promoted. Staff do not implement consistent and clear boundaries to help children and support their development. Leaders and managers have failed to notify the regulator of significant events. This affects external monitoring of the home and compromises oversight of safeguarding concerns.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leadership and management arrangements are ineffective. There is no registered manager and interim arrangements have not ensured robust oversight and scrutiny of the quality of care provided to children.

Leaders and the interim manager have not made sufficient progress towards meeting the requirements raised at the previous inspection. Leaders and the interim manager have therefore failed to show that they can make and sustain necessary improvements.

Leaders and the manager do not use monitoring systems effectively to ensure that there are continued improvements in the quality of care provided to children. Management oversight of children's records has not identified weaknesses in care planning for children. Furthermore, oversight of significant events by leaders and the manager is poor.

Staff do not have the knowledge, skills and experience to meet children's needs. For example, some staff have not received training in supporting children's mental health and emotional well-being. This limits the ability of staff to respond effectively to children's identified needs.

Although staff are receiving practice-based supervision, they are not consistently encouraged to reflect on significant incidents in the home. This poor practice is a missed opportunity to learn from incidents and prevent these from reoccurring.

Due to the safeguarding concerns highlighted during this inspection, Ofsted is of the view that if any further children moved into the home this would compromise the safety of the children already living there, as well as that of any new children moving in. Based on the information outlined above, Ofsted has issued a notice restricting accommodation at the home.

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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; 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; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; 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)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(d))	16 July 2023

Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that children's risk assessments contain clear information about children's risks and the strategies staff should follow to reduce these risks. Leaders and managers must ensure that staff take effective action to keep children safe, in line with the plans for their care. Leaders and managers must ensure that issues with damp in the home are addressed, to prevent mould which presents a hazard to children's health.	
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 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; 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)(h)) Specifically, leaders and managers must improve oversight of significant incidents and staff practice and the quality of care provided to children. Leaders and managers must ensure that staff have the skills and knowledge to meet children's needs.	16 July 2023
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and	16 July 2023

have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that they carefully consider the needs, risks and behaviours of children who are moving into the home and evaluate how they will meet these needs alongside the needs of children already living in the home. They must ensure they identify and plan to mitigate any potential risks that could affect children.	
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; 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; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)(vii)(x)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that children are helped to develop positive routines that enable them to engage in their education timetable. Further to this they must encourage and support children to engage in their educational plans.	16 July 2023
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—	16 July 2023

mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child’s behaviour, in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child’s behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship; understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them; and that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)(v)(vii)(xii)(xiii)(b))	
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; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;	16 July 2023

a child protection enquiry involving a child —

is instigated; or

there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.
(Regulation 44 (4)(b)(c)(d)(i)(e))

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: SC062248

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Quality Protects Children Limited

Registered provider address: Hill House, Archway Road, Huyton, Liverpool L36 9XB

Responsible individual: Anthony Nolan

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Emma Thornton, Social Care Inspector

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