

# SC062651

Registered provider: Care Focus 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 aged between 10 and 16 years who experience social and emotional difficulties.

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

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2024.

There is a registered school on site. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision on this site.

### Inspection dates: 13 and 14 August 2024

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| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b> | <b>inadequate</b> |
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| How well children and young people are helped and protected | inadequate |
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|-------------------------------------------|------------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | inadequate |
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

**Date of last inspection:** 5 September 2023

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 05/09/2023      | Full            | Good                 |
| 20/07/2022      | Full            | Good                 |
| 14/12/2021      | Full            | Good                 |
| 10/03/2020      | Full            | Good                 |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate**

Both children living in the home contributed to this inspection.

Children have expressed that they are unhappy at the home. They have told staff and professionals that they want to move out of the home.

Children's complaints are not taken seriously. On two occasions, children have made allegations about being hurt by staff and have been told by the manager that staff would never intentionally hurt them. On two other occasions, the child expressed to professionals that they felt that their concerns were not being taken seriously by managers. This fails to safeguard children and discourages them from sharing their feelings.

Children's freedom is very restricted. They have to build up free time. These restrictions have not been assessed on an individual basis. After time, some children have been able to work towards free time in the community.

Children have spent time staying at other properties on multiple occasions. These moves were due to peer dynamics and tensions at the home. On some occasions, children have viewed this as a holiday, and have had positive time experiences and one-to-one time with staff.

One child has experienced significant health concerns. The home's therapist has struggled to form a relationship with the child, and the child is not attending therapy sessions. At times of crisis, the staff have requested medical help and obtained additional support for the child through mental health services.

Children are educated on site and are making good progress with their education. One child sat their exams early. Children's educational timetables are personalised to their needs and preferences. Children's achievements are celebrated. The staff have thrown a graduation party and prom for one child.

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

On one occasion, an allegation against a member of staff was not reported to the local authority designated officer or Ofsted. On another occasion, when a child made an allegation against staff, the relevant information was not shared with Ofsted. It is not clear if the relevant information was shared with the local authority designated officer to help them to make informed decisions about these concerns.

The staff have used restraints that have not always been necessary or proportionate. These are not always recognised restraint techniques. The manager has not identified learning from incidents of inappropriate restraint to help the team to improve.

Children do not always have access to all the areas of the home. One child had their bedroom door locked. The staff said that they would open it when the child gave back leftover snacks. Once they had given the snacks back, the child was told by staff that they had to wait for staff to come and open their door. At times, door alarms have been used to monitor children's whereabouts. These restrictions have not been kept under regular review.

Children's access to the community is restricted. One child was unable to leave the grounds of the home for five days when she moved into the home. At this time, the child did not have unsupervised access to a telephone or computer and was therefore unable to privately contact anyone outside the home. The manager confirmed that this is standard practice to allow children to settle into the home.

Children do not have unsupervised access to a telephone or the internet. Telephone calls are held on a corded office telephone, which means that children have been unable to speak to their social workers or families in private. On two occasions, children have not been allowed to call Childline when they have requested to. The manager told the staff that while children must be allowed to call Childline, this must be when they are calm and communicative. Children's risk assessments and policies confirm that children are not allowed unsupervised telephone calls.

Children have made allegations about the staff. When this has happened, members of staff have been placed on lone-working risk assessments. The wording of these risk assessments is unclear. This puts children and staff at risk of further harm or allegations. One member of staff came to work at the home from a sister home, following an allegation being made against them. This member of staff was subject to an allegation risk assessment. Managers did not have this risk assessment or any information which would allow them to make safe decisions about the staff's deployment. This limits the manager's ability to ensure that staff are working in a safe way.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate**

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2024. The manager is also registered to manage another home owned by the organisation. The registered manager does not have effective management oversight of the home. The responsible individual has been in post since August 2024. There are proposed changes to the service that have not been implemented.

There have been lots of changes to the workforce since the last inspection. A high number of staff have left the home and new staff have started. This fails to provide children with a stable and consistent staff team. Children do not feel confident in the staff or supported by them.

Two members of staff have had one formal supervision session in 10 months. An additional two members of staff have not received supervision in their probationary period in line with the statement of purpose. For another two members of staff, there

were no records of any supervision sessions. Supervision was raised as a requirement at the last inspection. Additionally, staff have not had regular team meetings for six months. This does not help the manager to understand the learning and development needs of staff or support the manager to influence changes in staff practice.

Most staff are new to the home. One member of staff, who has been working at the home for a longer length of time, has described feeling 'burnt out' after supporting new staff and managing incidents.

Three members of staff have attained their level 3 diploma, other staff are working towards this. At least two members of existing staff have not achieved the relevant qualification within the required time frame.

The statement of purpose uses institutional language that stigmatises children and does not help staff to understand the therapeutic aims and purpose. This was recently sent to Ofsted in August 2024. Since this time, the new responsible individual has started to make changes to this document.

Staff do not always respond to children appropriately during times of crisis. One member of staff told a child who was in crisis that they were going to quit their job. Staff use disrespectful language in the records and describe children's behaviour in a negative way. A social worker said that one child would frequently raise that staff responses were inappropriate and unhelpful.

An independent visitor has not always visited the home monthly. On one occasion, a virtual visit took place. Two monthly reports were not sent to Ofsted. This reduces the oversight that Ofsted has.

Staff generally receive training that is specific to the needs of the 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          |
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| <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>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; and</p> <p>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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v)(b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that:</p> <p>individual staff risk assessments are clear and based on the protection of children;</p> <p>details of staff who require a risk assessment are shared with the manager and appropriate action is taken to manage identified risks.</p> | 26 September 2024 |
| <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>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 26 September 2024 |

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| <p>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;</p> <p>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.<br/>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(e)(f))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that:</p> <p>staff receive regular, reflective supervision sessions and support;</p> <p>children's plans are reviewed regularly to ensure that imposed restrictions are assessed as proportionate, necessary and agreed with each child's placing local authority;</p> <p>children have access to the community and grounds of the house;</p> <p>when children raise safeguarding concerns, they are responded to in a neutral way that allows them to feel that they are being listened to;</p> <p>when children raise safeguarding concerns, these are recorded without bias and shared transparently with the relevant authorities without delay.</p> |                          |
| <p>Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing—</p> <p>injury to any person (including the child);</p> <p>serious damage to the property of any person (including the child).</p> <p>Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b) (2))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that:</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p>26 September 2024</p> |

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| <p>restraints are used to prevent serious damage to property or injury to any person;</p> <p>restraints are carried out using trained techniques.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                          |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>the privacy of children is appropriately protected;</p> <p>children can access all appropriate areas of the children’s home’s premises; and</p> <p>any limitation placed on a child’s privacy or access to any area of the home’s premises—</p> <p>is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home;</p> <p>is necessary and proportionate;</p> <p>is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and</p> <p>allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe.<br/>(Regulation 21 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that:</p> <p>children can always access their bedrooms and that access to a child’s bedroom is not restricted for compliance;</p> <p>monitoring systems, such as door alarms, are agreed with the placing authority and kept under regular review.</p> | <p>14 November 2024</p>  |
| <p>Subject to paragraph (5), the registered person must ensure that children are provided at all reasonable times with access to the following facilities which they may use without reference to persons working in the home—</p> <p>a telephone on which to make and receive telephone calls in private.</p> <p>If the registered person considers it to be necessary for the purpose of safeguarding or promoting the welfare of a child, the registered person may impose conditions, prohibitions or restrictions upon a child’s—</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p>26 September 2024</p> |

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| <p>contact with parents, friends or relatives; or</p> <p>access to communications under paragraph (3).</p> <p>No measure may be imposed by the registered person under paragraph (5) unless—</p> <p>the child's placing authority consents to the imposition of the measure; or</p> <p>the measure is imposed in an emergency, and full details are given to the placing authority within 24 hours of its imposition. (Regulation 22 (3)(a) (5)(a)(b) (6)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that:</p> <p>children have access to a telephone to make and receive calls in private and which they may use without reference to persons working in the home;</p> <p>restrictions on a child's ability to make or receive calls in private are agreed with the local authority and regularly reviewed.</p> |                   |
| <p>No measure of control or discipline which is excessive, unreasonable or contrary to paragraph (2) may be used in relation to any child.</p> <p>The following measures may not be used to discipline any child—</p> <p>any restriction, other than one imposed by a court or in accordance with regulation 22 (contact and access to communications), on—</p> <p>a child's access to any internet-based or telephone helpline providing counselling for children. (Regulation 19 (1) (2)(c)(iv))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 26 September 2024 |
| <p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)(e))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 14 November 2024  |

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| <p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children's home;</p> <p>if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform.</p> <p>For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—</p> <p>the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or</p> <p>a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.</p> <p>The relevant date is—</p> <p>in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a) (3)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a))</p> | <p>14 November 2024</p> |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month.</p> <p>When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—</p> <p>if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and</p> <p>to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>14 November 2024</p> |

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| The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to—<br><br>HMCI. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a)(b) (7)(a))                               |                  |
| The registered person must ensure that all employees—<br><br>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) | 14 November 2024 |

\*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

## Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff record information about individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

## 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:** SC062651

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Care Focus Limited

**Registered provider address:** 2nd Floor, 168 Shoreditch High Street, London E1 6RA

**Responsible individual:** Chelsea Bailey

**Registered manager:** Gabrielle Pars

## Inspectors

Andrea Bounden, Social Care Inspector

Rebecca Hannell, Social Care Inspector

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