

SC065780

Registered provider: Milestones Care Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It is registered to provide care for up to three children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

The registered manager post is currently vacant. A manager has been appointed and is in the process of applying to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 May 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 26 July 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/07/2022	Full	Good
05/01/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/08/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/06/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy living in this home and are making good progress. They understand the reasons for rules in the home and feel boundaries are in place for their own well-being. Both children currently living in the home described it as 'relaxed', with one child commenting on how much they enjoy bringing their friends back to the home.

Staff advocate for children's education needs to be met. Both children are enrolled in education, with one looking into apprenticeship opportunities. One child had not been attending school for a full school year when they came to this home, but they are now enrolled in full-time education and making excellent progress towards achieving their goals. This encourages children to continue striving to reach their ambitions.

Staff offer children a variety of activities and outings. They encourage children to remain active and take care of their health and hygiene. When needed, staff take children to health appointments and support children to take their medication as prescribed.

Staff encourage children to spend time with people who are important to them. They support children to understand healthy relationships and boundaries. This helps children to develop and maintain positive relationships.

Staff carry out regular sessions with children to help them understand their emotions, positive behaviour and how to keep themselves safe. While these sessions are useful, staff often fail to complete planned work with children that is based on their presenting needs.

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

This home is a safe environment and has sufficient space for the children living there. Children's bedrooms and communal rooms have been recently redecorated to make them feel more homely. Children's photos are on display around the home and children said that they have input into how the home is decorated.

Children feel safe and can identify staff in the home who they would speak to if they had any worries. One child said, 'You can talk to staff about anything; nobody will judge you.' Both children confirmed that they know how to make a complaint, although neither child has felt the need to make one.

Risks for both children have reduced significantly since they moved to this home. One professional said, 'The nurture and care they [the staff] have offered has been really instrumental in supporting [name of child's] progress.' Risk assessments and

missing-from-care plans are updated regularly. However, these do not include specific strategies for staff to follow should an incident occur.

Staff have not had to use any physical interventions. Children have not made any allegations. Staff respond to safeguarding concerns appropriately and provide support to children after an incident.

Children's use of e-cigarettes has reduced since they moved to the home. However, there is not sufficient challenge to children when they use e-cigarettes. A placing authority's plan for e-cigarette use compromised a child's well-being, but this was not challenged by the manager or staff team. This is something the manager has now taken action to address.

Staff have developed positive working relationships with other professionals and keep them informed of children's progress. Children's achievements are documented and celebrated. This supports children to improve their self-esteem and self-worth.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The manager is in the process of submitting her application to register with Ofsted. She was previously in the deputy manager role and knows the home and the children well. The manager has the relevant experience to manage the home but is still working regular shifts with the children. This significantly impacts her ability to dedicate time and focus to the management role.

The manager is trusted by the staff team and is focused on improving outcomes for children. Staff said that they feel valued and well supported. One staff member said that support from the manager 'is just impeccable; I've never had such good support'.

Staff working with the children are appropriately qualified and safer recruitment practices are followed. This reduces the risk of unsuitable adults working with vulnerable children in the home.

Team meetings are held monthly, which provides staff with the opportunity to discuss the needs and presenting behaviours of the children. The manager challenges staff practice to ensure that consistent care is provided to children. The manager provides regular supervision and annual appraisals for the staff. Staff appraisals do not consider feedback from children or professionals. This does not ensure sufficient challenge to the staff team.

Staff are provided with access to regular online training, and some additional training has been commissioned for the staff team. However, the majority of the staff team has not been suitably trained in physical interventions. Other key training topics outlined in the home's statement of purpose have also not been completed by all staff. While this has not resulted in any safeguarding incidents, it does not ensure that all staff are able to keep children safe should a significant incident arise.

The manager has oversight of safeguarding incidents and much of the work being undertaken with children. However, the manager does not reflect on incidents to establish triggers for the child, consider staff practice, or determine patterns and trends.

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
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; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; 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)(i)(ii)(v)(b)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that all risk assessments contain clear steps for staff to follow should an incident arise. Smoking policies should be clear for staff, and children should be discouraged from using e-cigarettes.	5 May 2023
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—	5 May 2023

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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(g)(i)(h)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that they have oversight of all work being completed. Ensure that incidents and work are evaluated to establish patterns and trends and identify areas of learning in order to make continuous improvements.	
Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 16 (5)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff are provided with all the required training that is stated in the home's statement of purpose.	5 May 2023
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff are provided with all necessary training opportunities to ensure that they have the skills to keep children safe.	5 May 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all children receive proactive direct work, targeted to their specific needs, to help them understand how to keep themselves safe. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.7)

- The registered person should ensure that staff appraisals take into account, where reasonable and practical, the views of children and other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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: SC065780

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Milestones Care Homes Limited

Registered provider address: 32 Fieldway, Maghull, Liverpool, Lancashire L31 5NB

Responsible individual: Mark Armstrong

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Aislinn Cooper, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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