

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 provider and offers care for up to three children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, three children were living at the home. They all spoke to the inspector about their experiences of living in the home.

The home has been without a registered manager since November 2022. A manager has been appointed but has not yet registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 April 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

inadequate

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 3 May 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/05/2023	Full	Good
26/07/2022	Full	Good
05/01/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/08/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Children's experiences are varied. They have been helped to develop trusting relationships with staff. However, shortfalls in the leadership and management of the home mean that children's needs are not always prioritised and their experiences are not always positive.

The manager and staff have not consistently supported children to talk about things that are important to them, such as their identity. This reduces opportunities for staff to understand what is going on for children and to ensure that their needs are being met.

Children enjoy positive activities outside of the home, as a group and individually. One child has made significant achievements in football, and members of staff have attended important matches even when they are not on shift. This helps the children to build self-esteem and enjoy the benefits of physical activities.

All children are attending education full time and are making progress. The manager and staff have implemented routines and strategies to ensure the children's attendance and engagement. Therefore, children are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to achieve in education.

The home is not a homely or well-maintained environment for children. Several areas of the home, including children's bedrooms, the hallway, bathrooms and the lounge, require redecoration, deep cleaning and repairs. Children's bedroom furniture is broken and repair work following a leak has not been carried out in a timely manner. The garden area is unkempt. These issues were identified by children, the manager and staff before the inspection but have not been addressed by senior leaders. This leaves children feeling unheard and does not support them to develop a sense of belonging and pride in the home.

Staff talk to children appropriately but some of the language used in records is institutionalised and not child-centred. This does not help children to feel valued or included in their records about their time spent in the home.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Risks for each child have reduced since they moved into the home. Incidents of children going missing from the home are minimal and staff are vigilant to risks children may experience online and in the community.

However, not all staff are familiar with the home's policies and procedures in relation to the children using e-cigarettes. As a result, children are not consistently supported to

reduce risks around the use of e-cigarettes and have not all received access to smoking cessation services. This does not promote children's health and leaves them at risk of harm.

The manager and staff communicate effectively with external professionals. Professionals say that staff keep them informed of any relevant information and are quick to carry out any necessary actions. This ensures that there is a multi-agency approach to safeguarding children.

When incidents occur, oversight by managers is not robust and opportunities to identify learning to develop staff practice have been missed. This does not ensure that children's needs are prioritised or that staff respond consistently to children living in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Despite being in post for several months, the manager has failed to apply for registration with Ofsted. Consequently, the regulator has been unable to assess her suitability to be registered.

The manager knows the children well and is passionate about promoting positive outcomes. She is well regarded by external professionals, and staff say that they feel supported and benefit from her guidance. However, the manager works full-time shifts in the home and her availability to carry out management tasks is limited. The deputy manager is currently on maternity leave and the responsibilities of this position have not been delegated. The lack of management oversight significantly limits opportunities to evaluate the service and identify areas for learning and development.

Staff receive supportive and reflective supervision. However, supervision sessions are not held regularly. This prevents the manager from evaluating staff's care of the children effectively and identifying opportunities for development.

The manager is not supported effectively in her own professional development. She has not received effective supervision, appraisals or training relevant to her management role. This prevents her from developing her own knowledge and skills to meet the requirements of her role and improve the service.

Leaders and managers have not prioritised the training of staff. This has led to several staff not receiving mandatory training in line with the home's statement of purpose. Additionally, staff have not received training that is specific to the needs of the children. This means that staff do not have the necessary skills to provide care for the children in line with their individual needs.

Internal and external monitoring systems are not robust. Leaders and managers have failed to act on health and safety concerns identified by the independent person. This does not promote the safety and well-being of children and reduces the effectiveness of independent scrutiny of 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; 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 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 staff are aware of the smoking policies and that children are proactively discouraged from using e-cigarettes. In particular, the registered person must ensure that all actions relating to health and safety, including servicing the fire extinguishers, are acted on immediately.	31 May 2024
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.	31 May 2024

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; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for 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)(d)(f)(h)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all staff undertake mandatory and additional training to meet the needs of the children. Specifically, the registered person must ensure that there are appropriate managerial arrangements in place during periods when the registered manager is not in the home. Specifically, the registered person must ensure that they have management oversight to evaluate the quality of care being provided and identify areas of learning to make continuous improvements.	
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and the registered provider— is an organisation or a partnership; does not satisfy regulation 28; or is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home.	31 May 2024

If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of— the name of the person so appointed; and the date on which the appointment takes effect. (Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii) (2)(a)(b)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that the manager submits her application to register with Ofsted within the specified time frame.	
The registered manager must undertake such continuing professional development as is necessary to ensure that the registered manager has the skills needed for managing the home. (Regulation 29 (4)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that the manager is provided with regular supervision and appraisals and undertakes training and development as identified to ensure that they have the skills to provide clear and effective leadership to the staff team.	31 May 2024
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that the home is decorated, furnished, cleaned and maintained to a good	31 May 2024

standard throughout. Any repair work must be carried out in a timely manner.	
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— 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; strive to gain each child’s respect and trust; understand how children’s previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(viii)(ix)(x)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff practice meets the emotional and behavioural needs of the children.	31 May 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming and supportive by ensuring that staff job titles do not include institutionalised language. ('Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)

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: 5 Fletcher Close, Wirral, Cheshire CH49 5PH

Responsible individual: Mark Armstrong

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sarah Gilbert, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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