

SC065780

Registered provider: Milestones Care Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately run children's home. It is registered to provide care for up to three children. The provider states in its statement of purpose that it provides care for children who may have social and/or emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in February 2015.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 24 to 25 August 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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: 19 June 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/06/2019	Full	Good
03/07/2018	Full	Good
27/09/2017	Full	Good
23/05/2017	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

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

Two children are currently living at the home. One child told the inspector that she has good relationships with the staff team and that she feels safe at the home. She said she gets good support from staff and 'they are always up for a laugh'. Children are able to do things they enjoy, such as going to the funfair and other activities with staff.

One child is preparing to move into semi-independent accommodation in the coming months. She told the inspector that staff are supporting her to budget and are putting plans in place to enable her to manage her medication independently. This will help her to develop the skills to manage her medication safely and confidently when she leaves the home.

Children have not been consistently engaging with school or other education since coming to the home. The home is liaising with relevant professionals to address this. There are plans for one child to start at a new school and for one child to begin a vocational traineeship in the coming term.

Healthy daily routines are not yet established, particularly around the use of mobile phones and sleeping patterns. Children are often awake late at night, meaning they struggle to get up in the morning. As a result, one child is not always able to take their prescribed medication due to the time of day they get up.

Both children told the inspector that they know how to make a formal complaint, although they have not needed to. They do discuss any issues informally with the registered manager or staff.

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

Children have individualised risk-management plans in place which are updated with recent information. However, strategies to reduce risks do not provide staff with clear guidance around how to manage some known risks to children, such as what actions staff should take if they are concerned that a child has gone to a particular address.

There have been incidents when children have gone missing from the home. Although there are plans in place that outline the procedure staff are to follow when a child goes missing from the home, it is not clear how often staff should have contact with the child when they are in the community, and when they should begin this procedure.

When children have been missing from the home, staff actively search for them and children are given the opportunity to speak to someone independent of the home when they return. However, recording of these incidents lacks detail. It is not always clear if a return home interview has taken place, or the outcome of this. Staff identified one child who returned home with unexplained bruising. Records did not show if this information had been shared with the person undertaking the return interview or if it had been explored with the child. This means that the opportunity to gain information to potentially safeguard the child was missed.

Since the last inspection, an independent fire risk assessment has been completed which raised several actions required to improve the safety of the home environment. This had not been shared with the registered manager prior to this inspection and she was not clear whether any action had been taken to address the concerns that were raised. The physical environment of the home is not maintained to ensure that the safety of children and staff in the home is prioritised.

The home environment is poor and presents as unclean in some areas. During the inspection, there was a broken light fitting with exposed wiring that had not been reported for repair until the inspector pointed out the risk. Although some work has recently been undertaken, such as new flooring in the living area and new kitchen cupboards, this has not been completed to a high standard.

Records of consequences do not demonstrate discussion with children. Furthermore, records are not always being reviewed in a timely manner or evaluated for their effectiveness, in order to understand the impact of any action taken on children's behaviour.

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

The home is managed by an experienced and suitably qualified registered manager. She knows the children well and spends time with them to build meaningful relationships.

Some staff have recently left the organisation. Only two members of staff currently working at the home have the relevant qualification. Staff shortages have meant the manager has been required to work shifts in order to ensure that the home is adequately staffed. Although this means children have been cared for by people they know, this has led to shortfalls in the manager's monitoring and oversight of the home.

Training records do not show when staff have completed relevant courses, or when refresher training is required. In the absence of formal training, the manager has provided information for staff on key topics, including the specific needs of children living in the home. This system does not ensure that staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to meet the individual needs of the children.

Staff spoken to during the inspection told the inspector they felt supported in their roles. Staff receive regular supervision. However, supervision records do not demonstrate how staff are helped to improve their practice or consider the impact of any learning they may have undertaken. Not all staff have received their annual appraisal.

One social worker spoke positively about the home and said that they are kept informed of any incidents relating to their child, as well as receiving weekly updates.

The registered manager has submitted a review of the quality of care. However, the report does not include actions for the development of the home within the next six months in order to drive forward improvements in the quality of care provided to 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
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; 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)(d)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that risk-management plans include clear strategies for staff to use to manage and reduce risk, and that the home environment is maintained so as to protect children from harm.	15 September 2021
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— 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;	6 October 2021

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; 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)(c)(d)(h)) The registered person must ensure that the home has sufficient experienced and qualified staff to care for children, and that there are effective monitoring systems in place to ensure that oversight of all aspects of the day-to-day running of the home is undertaken.	
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— 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; 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 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)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(i)(c)) This refers to the registered person's monitoring and evaluation of each measure, including the effectiveness of	6 October 2021

each intervention and evidence to demonstrate that there has been consultation with children regarding the measure.	
In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (2)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that reports include actions to be taken in order to drive forward improvements in the home.	6 October 2021

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: Nina Howarth

Inspector

Genevieve O'Reilly, Social Care Inspector

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