

SC066458

Registered provider: Pebbles Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately operated and is registered to provide care for up to three children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or mental ill health. The home offers placements on a short-, medium- and long-term basis.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 7 December 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 November 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	inadequate
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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: 3 July 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/07/2019	Full	Good
03/01/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
19/06/2018	Full	Good
05/12/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

Children have built secure and trusting relationships with staff who know them well. Children say that they feel listened to and recognise that staff look out for their best interests. Children have completed consultation forms commenting on their relationships with staff. One child has described staff as 'selfless'. Children feel secure in the knowledge that staff care for them.

Staff understand the importance of education. Children who were previously out of education are now attending regularly. Where issues have arisen, staff have been proactive in consulting with other professionals to ensure that those issues are addressed. Children show aspirations and goals for their futures.

Staff help children to maintain relationships with their families and other important people. The staff support the children's friendships, enabling them to visit and have visitors. Arrangements are child-focused and ensure that children are encouraged to make and maintain close bonds. Consequently, children see their families and friends, which supports their identity and self-image.

Children are not always provided with a healthy and balanced diet. While staff express some concern for the children's eating habits, this is not reflected in the children's care plans or weekly meal planners. As a result, children are not receiving support to make healthy choices.

Children are encouraged to take part in activities and days out. This broadens their experiences and helps them to explore their interests. However, the staff do not capture or record these experiences to contribute to the children's life stories. Children are not able to take those memories of their time at the home with them when they move on. This may result in significant gaps in children's lives and they may not feel valued or appreciated.

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

Risk assessments do not always capture all of the information known about children. As a result, plans to mitigate risk do not sufficiently guide and inform staff on how to manage and reduce those risks. When staff are concerned about a risk, they do not always demonstrate professional curiosity or fully record instances of concern. Assessments and plans are not routinely updated or reviewed. This may mean that important information is missed, and plans are not effective in safeguarding children.

Staff undertake key-work sessions with children to educate them about relevant risks. This also helps them to understand how staff are supporting them to stay

safe. However, the recording of key work is inconsistent and does not demonstrate how this supports children to be safer. New systems have been introduced but there is no evidence of their effectiveness. Therefore, reduction in the risks to children and young people cannot be evidenced.

The physical environment of the home does not promote the safety and well-being of children. The home's boiler room has combustible materials within and an electrical socket with exposed wiring. The manager took action to address those risks immediately during the inspection. However, other routine repairs and maintenance have taken a long time to address, or remain outstanding for a significant length of time. This does not create a safe and comfortable living environment for children.

Staff are able to maintain oversight of the home's internet usage with internal safeguards, such as parental controls. However, children also have mobile phones which can access the internet independent of the Wi-Fi network. Staff do not have a good enough grip on access to sites via mobile devices and do not know what content children are accessing. Children may be exposed to information and images which could place them at risk of harm.

Children say that they feel safe in the home and protected by staff. One child told the inspector that he trusts staff and knows that they care for him. Children can identify an adult they can confide in if they have any worries or concerns.

Children do not go missing from the home and risks associated with contemporary issues, such as sexual and criminal exploitation, are not present. There have been no instances of staff needing to use physical intervention and no involvement with the police to manage behaviour or address offending. Children live in a settled environment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The home has been without a registered manager since 1 April 2021. During this time, leaders have not provided the home with sufficient staffing and support to ensure the smooth running of the home. This has resulted in deficits in the oversight of the home, the maintenance of records and the completion of important tasks.

Due to recent changes within the organisation, the home is currently reliant on agency staff to cover gaps in the rota. The organisation's rota builds in a lack of flexibility. This, along with the shortage of permanent staff, has meant that the acting manager has, on occasion, had to cover shifts. This has had an impact on the time they can dedicate to managing staff and overseeing the progress of children.

The previous manager failed to follow the home's safeguarding procedures when a member of staff raised concerns about a colleague's behaviour. On another occasion, a child made a complaint which staff failed to record in line with the organisation's policies and procedures. On both occasions, the oversight of the independent visitor was required to raise these issues and elicit an appropriate response. Leaders' and

managers' failure to respond to these concerns may have left children at risk of harm.

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that they have been effective in addressing issues identified by external professionals. They have not been responsive to the recommendations of the independent visitor. This has resulted in actions not being taken to ensure the safety and well-being of children.

Leaders and managers do not have effective systems to maintain sufficient oversight of the home. For example, some staff training may not have been completed or is out of date. The manager was unable to demonstrate that all staff have completed mandatory training. This means that staff may not have the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of the children. Furthermore, leaders and managers have failed to ensure that staff are trained to deliver the model of care as set out in the home's statement of purpose.

Supervision does not take place in line with the organisation's policy. Staff are not receiving adequate opportunities for reflection on their practice and this limits the manager's oversight of their performance and training needs.

The interim manager completed a review of the quality of care provided by the home. The report did not demonstrate the impact of the care provided on the experiences and progress of children. This means that leaders and managers do not have insight into how to develop the service and make improvements which benefit children.

The organisation has appointed a manager, who has been in post since 20 September 2021. The new manager has demonstrated a determination to address the concerns highlighted during the inspection. She has high aspirations for the outcomes of children and for the service as a whole. She is supported by a dedicated staff team whose members are enthusiastic about the implementation of changes.

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 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— provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iv))	17 December 2021
The health and well-being standard is that— children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. (Regulation 10 (1)(c)) This particularly relates to children being offered a varied diet that includes fresh fruits and vegetables.	17 December 2021
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;	17 December 2021

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 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)(vi)(vii)(d))	
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; 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))	17 December 2021
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	17 December 2021
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and	17 December 2021

are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))	
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children (“a quality of care review”) at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children’s home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b))	17 December 2021

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff help children understanding who they are and where they come from. This is recognised in good social work practice, for example through undertaking life-story work or other direct work. Staff in children’s homes should play a full role in work of this kind. (‘Guide to the children’s home regulations, including the quality standards’, page 16, paragraph 3.14)

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: SC066458

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Pebbles Care Limited

Registered provider address: 2 The Calls, Leeds LS2 7JU

Responsible individual: Amanda Quinn

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Deb Duffy, Social Care Inspector

Evelyn Chafota, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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