

SC067839

Registered provider: Future in Mind

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private provider. The home provides care for up to two children who have experienced childhood instability, resulting in trauma and associated complex emotional and social difficulties.

The registered manager left his post in May 2022. A new manager had been in post for two weeks at the time of this inspection. She has submitted her application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 August 2022

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: 13 July 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/07/2021	Full	Good
17/12/2019	Full	Good
01/08/2018	Full	Outstanding
02/08/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Overall, children enjoy living in this home. However, children have experienced instability with a significant number of staff leaving the home, including the manager. While one child has made good progress, another child's progress is variable.

Pictures of the children participating in activities are displayed on the walls of the home. However, the home is looking tired and worn and has sustained some damage as a result of incidents. For example, one child's bedroom is bare, and the bedroom walls have been damaged. The manager is in the process of making the child's room more homely and personalising it to the child's preferences and needs. The child talked to the inspector about the colours they had chosen and preferred themes for their room.

Shortfalls in the oversight of children's care and safety have compromised the progress of one child. The child has not been well supported to develop skills that will enable them to make progress and participate in a comprehensive review of their safety in line with their age, needs and development. For example, the child's statutory plans required the manager to implement an independence plan. The plan was implemented; however, it has not been updated or reviewed in the three months it has been in place. In addition, the child is not allowed a phone. In the interim, managers have not considered how they can support the child to develop the skills and understanding to use a phone safely. Insufficient planning and support are limiting the child's progress.

Children are registered with local healthcare services and supported by staff to attend routine appointments. However, as a result of a high turnover of staff, information about one child's health needs was not easily accessible or known by staff. While routine appointments are attended, follow-up appointments and advice have not been sought when issues arise. Consequently, the child has not been supported to that ensure their health needs are met and they receive the support required.

In the two weeks she has been in post, the manager has been proactive and creative in exploring an education provision for one child who is not in school. However, there was insufficient evidence to show the steps that had been taken to support the child educationally since the last inspection. Information is disorganised, and it was difficult to establish how staff have implemented structure and supported the child to have learning experiences. The child's files lack the required information to guide staff effectively. This affects the quality of information that the staff have available to help them meet the child's educational needs.

One child has made significant progress since living in this home and now has a long-term plan of foster care. The child has engaged well in the therapeutic programme offered and, as a result, has made significant progress in terms of their emotional development. They have excellent school attendance and have also learned to swim.

Children have positive relationships with a small number of staff who know them well. The inspector observed lots of positive interactions during the inspection. For example, children planted flowers, built dens in their bedroom and approached staff for hugs. One child's achievements were celebrated through a buffet lunch with music and laughing. Children's life skills were also observed when they helped clear the table and washed up.

Staff make sure that children have opportunities to experience different activities and have fun. Staff encourage children to join clubs, such as scouts and swimming, and one child also visits the local gym. Staff have organised horse-riding lessons for another child, in line with their interests. As a result, children have the opportunity to create happy memories and learn new skills.

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

During the inspection, staff could identify the steps that they would take to prevent children coming to harm. However, one child's written risk assessments does not fully evaluate or set out strategies for staff to mitigate risk. In addition, the documents do not contain information about all known risks, and risk assessments are not always updated with new guidance following incidents. This leaves staff, particularly new staff, without access to clear and up-to-date information.

Safeguarding arrangements in the home require improvement. Staff are not always effective in supervising children in line with their plans. For example, soap products are locked away due to the risks of one child ingesting these. Despite being supported by two staff, the child was able to access fairly liquid that had been left out. In addition, ineffective planning has resulted in staff not using restraint when it is proportionate and necessary to keep children safe or not being able to restrain children safely. This has resulted in police being called out to the home and has left a child vulnerable to criminalisation.

When a child made a disclosure of historical abuse, they were supported sensitively and creatively by staff. The information was shared promptly with the police and local authority. However, record-keeping is poor, and records of steps taken subsequently are unclear. Minutes from strategy meetings have not been obtained by managers. While the child received some support in therapeutic sessions, it is not clear how staff have helped them to prepare for police interviews and what support was in place afterwards. Since starting in post, the manager has identified shortfalls and is working in partnership with the local authority to coordinate planning and effective support regarding this sensitive and difficult issue.

There are shortfalls in staff's recording of incidents and physical interventions. For example, forms are not always completed fully and dated accurately. This makes it difficult to understand whether debriefs with children have been completed within appropriate time frames. Descriptions of incidents can be misleading. On one occasion, it was not clear whether or not a child had been held on the floor. The manager has undertaken a comprehensive review of these documents and is completing reflective exercises with the staff team to bring about improvements in this area.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that staff are safely recruited in this home. Managers have not obtained all relevant references and ensured that gaps in employment have been accounted for. This practice does not help to ensure that recruitment of new staff is safe, which leaves children vulnerable.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in the leadership and management of the home. The registered manager left in May 2022. A new manager has been in post for two weeks. Before this, there was inconsistent and ineffective management oversight of the home. During the inspection, information was not easily accessible and often could not be located by the manager.

The manager has submitted her application to register with Ofsted. She genuinely cares for the children and wants the best for them. The manager has been reflective about shortfalls in the care and protection children. She has proactively implemented a robust action plan to improve standards within the home. This has the potential to improve children's experiences, progress, welfare and safety.

At times, before the new manager was appointed, there were not enough staff to meet the children's needs. This left children and staff vulnerable. The manager has addressed this shortfall and sufficient staffing is now in place.

There has been a high turnover of staff. Managers have ensured that the home is now fully staffed. The majority of staff are in their probationary period and have not yet had sufficient opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with children. This means children are not provided with continuity of care from a group of adults who know them well.

Managers have failed to ensure that staff receive consistent supervision that promotes their development and allows them to reflect on the care that they provide to children. Staff supervision records could not be located. The manager has responded to this shortfall by increasing support through more regular team meetings and reflective upskilling sessions, and she is now planning regular supervision sessions with individual staff. During the inspection, an upskilling session, led by the director of therapy, took place to help staff understand the home's therapeutic model of care.

Overall, the majority of staff have completed mandatory training. Where staff have not completed this, training is scheduled to take place. However, staff do not always receive training that supports them to meet children's specific needs. In addition, one member of staff has not achieved the relevant qualification for his role, within the required timescale. As a result, staff may not be equipped to support children and meet their needs.

Managers have failed to notify Ofsted of serious incidents that have occurred at the home. This lack of information-sharing, as required by regulation, does not enable Ofsted to evaluate the quality of practice and assess if the correct actions have been taken to safeguard children.

As a result of inconsistent management, the most recent quality of care review has not been completed and submitted to Ofsted. This prevents the manager from effectively evaluating what has been a difficult period in the home and informing development plans to bring about improvements in the care that children receive.

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— ensure that staff— protect and promote each child's welfare; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(v)) In particular, ensure that staff provide support to children when they disclose abuse.	15 September 2022
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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i))	15 September 2022

In particular, ensure that each child has a risk assessment in place which includes all known risks and provides staff with strategies to follow to keep children safe. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
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's workforce provides continuity of care to 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)(a)(c)(e)(f)(h)) In particular ensure that the manager reviews and evaluates the quality of care to ensure that shortfalls are identified and rectified. In addition, ensure that staff have the required training to meet children's individual needs. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	15 September 2022
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.	15 September 2022

The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children’s home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32(1)(2)(a)(b)93)(d)) In particular, ensure that all staff are safely recruited.	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children’s home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. 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— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) (“the Level 3 Diploma”); or	31 December 2022

a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— 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; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(b)(d) (4)(a)(b) (5)(b)) This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that all staff have completed the relevant qualification in residential childcare. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
The registered person must— The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (1) (4)(b)) This specifically relates to all employees, including agency staff, receiving practice related supervision in line with the organisations policy.	15 September 2022
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))	15 September 2022
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. After completing a quality-of-care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person	15 September 2022

intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report").

The registered person must—

supply to HMCI a copy of the quality-of-care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed. (Regulation 45 (3) (4)(a))

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children's needs are met in a homely, domestic environment. This specifically relates to ensuring that the home is well maintained and decorated. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that when children are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, staff support the child to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. This specifically relates to ensuring that children have structure and regular opportunities for learning when they are not attending formal education. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. This specifically relates to accurate recording of incidents and physical interventions. ('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: SC067839

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Future in Mind

Registered provider address: Future in Mind, 65 Market Street, Hednesford, Cannock, Staffordshire WS12 1AD

Responsible individual: Carly Adams

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Natasha Skinner, Social Care Inspector

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