

SC356817

Registered provider: Lifetime Opportunities Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private company and reopened on 7 July 2021. The home provides care for up to four children who may have learning disabilities. The home is run by an experienced registered manager who has been employed at the home since 10 December 2014.

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.

The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the provider.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 February 2022

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 13 August 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: not judged

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/08/2019	Interim	Not judged
05/03/2019	Interim	Not judged
16/01/2019	Interim	Not judged
17/01/2018	Interim	Not judged

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from reliable care provided by patient and dependable staff. Children enjoy playing with the toys and sensory equipment available to them in the home. Staff help children to enjoy spending time in the activity rooms along with their own personalised bedrooms. This has been particularly important due to the impact of the pandemic, including two periods of self-isolation in the home.

Staff understand children's needs well. They are provided with comprehensive guidance through the children's individual care plans, which are written from the child's perspective. This helps staff to develop a sound knowledge of how to effectively support each child's needs. Staff appropriately adapt their communication to meet the child's level of understanding. Staff undertake regular direct work with children, which helps them to both make sense of, and make choices for themselves in, their day-to-day lives.

Children's health needs are supported well through tailored health plans. Staff help children to access and attend appointments with specialist support services. However, potential services available through the local offer are not fully understood, which may include additional resources available to children.

Staff work collaboratively with each child's school. Children's education is supported effectively, with staff communicating well with the school. This helps ensure a shared approach to responding to children's learning needs. Children are making positive progress in their learning and overall development.

Children moving into the home are provided with child-friendly information to help them understand what day-to-day life will be like in the home. One good example of this was a bespoke children's guide developed for one child with lots of visual information. Professionals supporting each child shared very positive feedback on their progress since moving to the home. Staff communicate effectively with the professional network for each child. This helps children's emerging needs to be identified and appropriately supported. Children have settled well into the home.

Staff regularly support children to enjoy spending time with their family. This is important for each child's emotional well-being and their sense of belonging.

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

The home environment includes key locks on a limited number of downstairs internal and external doors. Although staff carry keys to open doors, this does not enable children to access the exit routes independently. Following this inspection, the registered manager and responsible individual plan to replace key locks with

thumb locks on the downstairs doors. Staff could not access the fire extinguisher in the downstairs hallway due to this being in a locked cover. The lock was removed and the fire extinguisher was made accessible to staff during the inspection.

There have been a small number of accidents and/or injuries identified by staff for one child. Recordings completed by staff have not consistently provided all the relevant information. This has been appropriately identified within the monthly monitoring report completed by the independent person. The manager subsequently reviewed the recordings, met with the staff team and identified staff development needs. This included a renewal of safeguarding training which, although booked, has not been completed by all staff. The manager has recently implemented a new approach to recording which enables the appropriate information to be gathered. However, this is not, as yet, embedded into staff practice.

Staff have a sound knowledge of children's individual vulnerabilities and known risks. The risk management plans are written from the child's perspective. These are a good example of practice and provide staff with clear strategies to address risks.

Children are supported to develop ways to help them respond to difficult feelings in a safer way. Staff support children to express their needs. This has shown a decrease in children communicating this through their behaviour. Staff receive appropriate training in how to provide positive support in response to behaviours that challenge. However, this was not provided to an agency staff member working regularly in the home. Although the use of physical intervention has only been needed occasionally, it is important that all staff share the same skills in de-escalation if required.

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

The registered manager is dual registered for another children's home in the organisation. They have a good understanding of the children's needs and role model good practice. However, due to the recent increase in responsibilities of overseeing a third home in the company, the registered manager has not been present in the home for significant periods over the last two months. This included a period of more than twenty-eight days during December 2021.

Staff feel well supported by the manager, who has maintained regular contact over the telephone during the period away from the home. The registered manager has also attended meetings for children virtually. The home does not have a full team, with senior staff currently being recruited. However, consistency of care has been maintained due to the commitment of the current staff team. Following this inspection, the responsible individual is supporting the registered manager to return to their substantive duties, which will ensure that they are regularly present in the home.

Training provided to staff equips them to meet the children's individual needs effectively. However, this training is not available for agency staff who regularly work

in the home. This is significant due to the consistent use of agency staff, alongside the core staff team, due to the ongoing recruitment of new staff.

Supervision is provided to permanent staff. However, agency staff do not receive supervision, despite one staff member working the equivalent of full-time hours. This means they do not benefit from the space and time to reflect on their practice. The quality of supervision provided by the registered manager is good. While regular supervision is planned for this year, there has not been consistency in the frequency of supervision provided over recent months.

The registered manager feels very well supported by the responsible individual. Although the quality of supervision provided to them is good, it is not regular, in the context of the scope of their role. The responsible individual has provided good support to the staff team during the COVID-19 pandemic. Appropriately, they have been focusing on recruitment of new staff, with initiatives in place to address this gap.

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 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; and 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(d)(f))	18 March 2022
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b)) This specifically relates to ensuring that there is adequate means of escape from the home in the event of a fire.	18 March 2022

The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; and receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b))	18 March 2022
If the person who is in day-to-day charge of the children's home proposes to be absent from the home for a continuous period of 28 days or more, the registered person must give notice in writing to HMCI of the proposed absence. (Regulation (48) (1))	18 March 2022

Recommendation

- The manager is not aware of the local offer setting out the support available for children with special education needs or disabilities. This is a missed opportunity to access additional for resources for children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 26, paragraph 5.4)

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: SC356817

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Lifetime Opportunities Ltd

Registered provider address: Windsor House, Bayshill Road, Cheltenham
Gloucestershire GL50 3AT

Responsible individual: Shona Wands Alderson

Registered manager: Emma Thomas

Inspector

Maria Loneragan, Social Care Inspector

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