

SC357133

Registered provider: Social Care Services 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. The home provides care for up to three children who may experience social and/or emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2023.

At the time of the inspection, two children were living in the home. Both children spoke to the inspector about their experiences living in the home.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 March 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 8 November 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/11/2022	Full	Good
03/08/2021	Full	Good
04/09/2019	Full	Good
25/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children like living in the home. Both children have lived in the home since before the last inspection and are settled. They are helped to build positive relationships with staff who know them well. This helps children to feel valued and cared for.

Children are listened to. They have individual and joint meetings with staff and are able to share their views about the care they receive. When children raise complaints, they are dealt with swiftly and in a sensitive manner. Staff support children to understand expectations and boundaries around living together and how to treat each other with respect.

Children's health and well-being needs are met well. Children are supported to access routine and specialist healthcare as required. The manager has developed individualised health plans that highlight the key health issues for each child. These plans are used to inform direct-work sessions that staff carry out with children relating to their health.

Children take part in a range of activities, both inside and outside the home. They watch films, have singing and dancing nights and meet friends in the local area. Children also attend football and youth clubs. This helps them to develop positive peer relationships, develop their confidence and stay active.

Children's family time is supported in line with their plans, and families are made to feel welcome in the home. The manager has advocated for one child to ensure that assessments were completed to support their return to family.

Staff encourage and support children in education. One child has good school attendance after a period of instability. The manager engaged well with school staff to advocate on the child's behalf to ensure that their needs are being met. However, when children are not attending education, they are provided with little structure. This does not support their transition back into full-time education and limits their opportunities to achieve their academic potential.

Areas such as the kitchen and lounge have been updated recently and children were involved in the refurbishment. However, a cleaning schedule implemented by the manager is not fully embedded and some areas of the home are not maintained to a good standard. This does not enable children to develop a sense of belonging or pride in the home.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Children's individual risk plans are clear and updated regularly. Children are involved in formulating these plans and include their views about strategies that staff can use to help them. When there are additional safeguards in place, staff are updated

about the changes so that they can look after the children according to their plans. A joint training session of staff and specialist health services has helped staff to develop their understanding of children's risks.

Regular planned and unplanned key-work sessions take place with children to help them to understand issues that are affecting them. Sessions have covered areas such as the dangers of vaping, smoking and substance use, healthy relationships, and safe use of mobile phones. These sessions help children to make informed choices.

The use of physical intervention when staff need to hold children to keep them and others safe is reasonable and proportionate. Incidents of restraint are recorded appropriately and children are spoken to afterwards by a person who was not involved. The manager evaluates each incident, but staff involved have not been spoken to, in line with the regulation. This is a missed opportunity to enable staff to reflect on the incident and to identify any learning.

When allegations are made, they have been investigated thoroughly and referred to the local authority designated officer. However, when one incident occurred in the evening, the child's placing authority was not informed until the following day. The manager took action to address this and staff are now aware of the process they need to follow.

Staff have advocated with children's placing authorities to implement age-appropriate plans to enable children to safely spend time with their friends. Consequently, incidents of children going missing have reduced. When incidents do occur, staff know how to respond. However, records lack detail and plans do not always identify actions for staff to take. This limits opportunities to ensure that practice in the home is consistent and that information is shared effectively with other professionals.

Two new members of staff has been recruited since the last inspection. The recruitment processes in place are robust and effective. This means that children are looked after by suitable people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is suitably experienced and is working towards the relevant qualification. He is supported by an assistant manager who knows the home well. Together, they provide clear leadership and guidance to the team.

Staff enjoy working in the home and speak about children with affection and pride. Staff receive regular, good-quality supervision sessions and annual reviews. Children are asked to share their views about the care they receive and staff practice. Their views are incorporated into supervision sessions and appraisals and help to inform the care they receive.

The manager has improved monitoring processes to increase oversight of practice in the home. The manager evaluates incidents and implements learning to further develop practice. The learning from a medication error was quickly identified and new processes put in place.

The manager is proactive in seeking regular feedback from professionals and family members. One placing authority social worker was complimentary about the care and empathy shown by the staff team and how they have never given up on the child. However, feedback is not included in the quality of care review for the home. This is a missed opportunity to demonstrate how feedback is used to develop practice in 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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—that staff— understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(iv)(v)(viii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that clear routines are in place to support children with their learning when they are not attending education full time.	5 June 2024
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which— is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect; and sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect.	5 June 2024

The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular— provide for liaison and co-operation with any local authority which are, or may be, making a child protection enquiry in relation to a child accommodated in the home; provide for the prompt referral of an allegation about current or ongoing abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the home is located; provide for the prompt referral of an allegation about past abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the alleged abuse or neglect occurred; provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response; describe the measures which may be necessary to protect children following an allegation of abuse or neglect; and describe how and to whom staff are to report, without delay, any concern about abuse or neglect of a child. (Regulation 34 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that clear processes are in place for informing children’s placing authorities when an incident occurs out of office hours.	
The registered person must ensure that— 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 has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; 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)(b)(i)(ii))	5 June 2024

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 feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. 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 intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report"). (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(b)(c) (3))	5 June 2024
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff understand the home's expectations about what information needs to be recorded when children go missing from the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.29)
- The registered person should ensure that the home is kept clean and well maintained throughout. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.3)

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: SC357133

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Social Care Services Limited

Registered provider address: 31 Shaw Road, Stockport SK4 4AG

Responsible individual: Annabella Foulkes

Registered manager: Dale Buchan

Inspector

Colin Jones, Social Care Inspector

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