

SC368137

Registered provider: Phoenix Childcare Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two children or young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by a private provider of education and care.

The registered manager has been in post since December 2017. He has submitted his resignation to the company and informed Ofsted.

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.

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

Inspection dates: 22 to 23 June 2021

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded, and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 25 July 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/07/2019	Full	Good
13/05/2019	Full	Inadequate
06/03/2019	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
01/11/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that the home is providing the care and support outlined in its statement of purpose.

Since June 2019, one child has lived in the home. Despite the child initially making progress, attending school and engaging purposefully with the staff, more recent records confirm a significant deterioration in their health and education. The registered manager had not sufficiently evaluated records or provided sufficient critical reflection, and leaders and managers failed to fully recognise the seriousness of the concerns or to escalate them effectively.

Despite their attempts, leaders and managers have failed to ensure that the child has received any formal or meaningful education or training for almost one year. Inspectors were told by the registered manager, and a local authority professional, that the child has not benefited from any educational package offered for approximately three years.

Since the child moved into the home, leaders and managers have not collected memorabilia that would contribute to her life-story work, such as from birthdays and days out. Better attention needs to be given to ensure that events and memories are captured and stored in a way that will help the child remember and make sense of her experience of living in the home.

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

Leaders and managers have failed to take adequate action to safeguard the child. Inspectors noted that, since the assurance visit by Ofsted in December 2020, there has been an increase in the number of incidents, resulting in two admissions to hospital for medical treatment. Furthermore, two records showed staff failed to follow agreed strategies to safeguard the child.

Leaders and managers have failed to manage a difficult relationship with the child's family which has sometimes led to staff failing to prevent potentially harmful situations arising. Risk assessment and behaviour-support plans do not contain sufficient information. The assessments have been reviewed and updated following serious incidents and, to some extent, they detail how risks will be managed and reduced. However, staff have not received adequate direction from the registered manager to enable them to apply the strategies, and the assessments do not make sufficient reference to the child's current health risks.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The leadership and management of the home are ineffective and have directly resulted in the child's outcomes significantly deteriorating.

Monitoring by leaders and managers is weak. Inspectors found the registered manager to be unaware of the poor quality of some records and there was a lack of sufficient challenge and escalation in relation to concerns. Some records were found to lack management oversight, detail, reflection and analysis.

Leaders and managers have failed to demonstrate enough critical reflection across records. Plans lack evidence of how they have been informed by the provider's clinical team and the registered manager could not evidence them being ratified by the local authority.

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that staff are led and supported consistently well. Staff reported to the inspectors that they lack direction, effective supervision, and support following serious incidents. Senior leaders are aware of the discord within the team and told the inspectors they were in the process of addressing the practice of the registered manager. Staff described their morale as 'low', and some staff reported being 'burned out'.

Members of the senior leadership team have met with Ofsted and are aware of the serious and widespread failings. Following this inspection, one compliance notice in relation to the leadership and management of the home and 10 requirements have been made. Senior leaders have taken immediate action to assure themselves of the current leadership and management of the home, and they have provided assurances to Ofsted in the form of an action plan. They are working closely with the local authority to safeguard the child. Ofsted will continue to monitor the action plan.

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 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 help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; 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; raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child's education or training provider and the child's placing authority; 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; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans.	27 August 2021

(Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vii)(viii)(x)) In particular, ensure that the child has access to meaningful learning opportunities that are in line with her learning needs.	
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. 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a) (2)(a)(g)(i)(h)) This relates to the manager ensuring that minutes of supervision sessions and post-incident debriefs record how staff are provided with time to reflect and learn from serious incidents, and that the home operates in line with its statement of purpose.	27 August 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— understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each	21 July 2021

child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)) Senior leaders must ensure that there is a competent manager overseeing the leadership and management of the home.	
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— understand and apply the home’s statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home’s statement of purpose; 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; help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult; provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and	27 August 2021

enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(c)(i)(ii)) This relates to ensuring that the home is managed effectively, and that staff are provided with clear support and direction from leaders. Ensure that all documents that need to be, are ratified by the local authority social worker and include management oversight. Ensure that all support plans include informed strategies that help the staff protect the child from risk-taking behaviours.	
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child’s relevant plans; understand the child’s health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child’s health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child’s age and understanding; take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child’s health and well-being needs; and understand and develop skills to promote the child’s well-being; that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(c))	27 August 2021

This relates to the need for immediate action to safeguard the child from the serious impact on their health and emotional well-being of a restrictive diet.	
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child’s behaviour, in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child’s behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child’s age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful; help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship; understand how children’s previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have	27 August 2021

the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children; understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(ix)(x)(xi)(xii)(xiii)) This in relation to the need for urgent action to review all records to ensure that they are sufficiently detailed and reflect any actions taken, the decision-making processes and identified risks.	
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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(vi)) Ensure that action is taken to protect the child from the risk of harm as a result of their self-injurious behaviours.	27 August 2021

The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b))	27 August 2021
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(b)) This relates to ensuring that all records are completed in full and are dated and signed by the author.	27 August 2021
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 (4)(a))	27 August 2021

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that photos and memorabilia for each child are captured and stored in a way that will help the child remember and make sense of their experience of living in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes 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: SC368137

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Phoenix Childcare Ltd

Registered provider address: Unit 5, Chinon Court, Lower Moor Way, Tiverton
EX16 6SS

Responsible individual: Stephen Nicholson

Registered manager: Jamie Inch

Inspector

Linda Bond, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/ofsted

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