

SC387148

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The provider states in their statement of purpose that this home provides care for up to five children with learning disabilities and/or autism spectrum disorder. The home is run by a private company and provides education on site at a registered school. The inspector only inspected the social care provision at this school. The manager has been registered since December 2015.

The inspector discussed any continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.

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 September 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 December 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	requires improvement to be good
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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: 22 May 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/05/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
14/03/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
09/04/2018	Full	Good
16/05/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Most children are supported to enjoy a range of activities both in and out of the home. Memories are captured in photos. However, one child has been unable to go out in the community due to delays in multi-agency decision-making around risk management. The child has not been provided with an advocate to ensure that his best interests are considered. As a result, he has not been able to enjoy activities with the other children.

Children have made progress in some areas since moving into the home. Staff support children with increasing their independence skills in line with their individual needs. Professionals and parents spoke about positive changes they had seen in the children's ability to follow routines and understand appropriate boundaries. One social worker said, 'Staff have a good insight into what [name of child] wants.'

Staff support children to attend school. Communication between staff and the children's schools takes place regularly. Children have education, health and care (EHC) plans in place. However, the communication methods suggested within the plans are not used consistently by staff. This reduces the opportunities for children to develop their communication skills.

The home is clean and tidy. Managers have considered the impact of COVID-19. Steps are in place to ensure that visitors to the home do not increase the risk. Children are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms. Staff use objects of reference and a suggestion box to help the children contribute their ideas.

Planning for children moving into the home is thorough. Managers have met children before making decisions to ensure that they are able to meet each child's needs effectively. Managers have attended meetings with specialists to ensure that children have arrived with any equipment needed for their health needs. However, on one occasion, a child's physiotherapy plan was not addressed effectively in the planning. As a result, she has not received physiotherapy since moving in a month ago.

Children are able to spend time with their families. Some children are on shared care arrangements. One parent said, '[Name of child] has good relationships with staff.' Children have been able to enjoy celebrations with staff when moving on from the home. One child has returned to spend time with friends and staff. This increases each child's sense of permanence and belonging.

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

Staff have been recruited safely. Necessary checks are completed and processes now include checks abroad when necessary. This meets a previous requirement.

Steps have also been taken to meet other previous requirements, including removing hazardous items in the home and informing the regulator of serious incidents.

Staff are aware of the contents of the risk management plans and talk confidently about how they manage risk. However, not all risk management plans include clear strategies for staff and when to seek medical advice. This has the potential for staff to work inconsistently.

Staff rarely use sanctions and instead focus on promoting positive behaviour. However, staff have not recorded when sanctions have been continued in the home after being issued at school. This reduces the opportunity for management oversight and reflection between the staff.

Physical intervention is used as a last resort and is very rare. Staff record physical interventions and records are reviewed by managers. However, debriefs with children are not recorded. Mechanical restraint is also used in line with children's needs. However, when methods are not included in the EHC plans, this has not been recorded as a form of restraint in line with regulation.

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

The manager is experienced and qualified. She has been registered manager since 2015. Professionals reported good communication from the manager. Creative methods are being used to try to recruit staff, and support is received from staff working in the on-site school who know the children well. This provides consistency for the children.

An independent person carries out a monthly visit to the home and provides a report. The manager also carries out a review of the quality of care. However, feedback is not consistently sought and included from children, parents and professionals. This is a missed opportunity for the service provider to take new ideas and improve.

Staff receive supervision and find the time valuable. Changes in staffing and a reduced management team have meant that there have been times when staff have not received supervision in line with the home's policy. New staff have also been affected by this. Due to the complex needs of the children, it is particularly important that staff receive this support regularly.

Staff have received a range of training since the last inspection. However, a number of courses have expired, which has not been picked up in the manager's monitoring system. This means that staff have not revisited some training courses for a number of years. Training in specific communication methods, including Makaton, Picture Exchange Communication System and British sign language, has not been refreshed. This has affected staff's confidence in using the communication methods consistently throughout the day.

The manager communicates regularly with parents and other agencies. However, the manager has not used escalation processes effectively to ensure that decisions are made quickly. As a result, children have not always received care in line with their best interests.

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 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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(f)(g)(ii)(h)) This relates specifically to managers escalating concerns to avoid delays in decision-making for children. This also relates to managers ensuring effective systems are in place to help the monitoring of supervisions and training in order to ensure that adequate support is provided to staff, particularly those in their probation period.	20 February 2022

This also relates to managers seeking feedback when reviewing the quality of care and using this information to guide any necessary changes.	
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare; ensure that each child— is given appropriate advocacy support. (Regulation 7 (1)(c) (2)(a)(i)(b)(iii)) This relates specifically to ensuring that a child is given an independent advocate when necessary to ensure that the child's best interests are always considered.	20 February 2022
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;	20 February 2022

the name of the person who used the measure (“the user”), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; 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. Paragraph (3) does not apply in relation to restraint that is planned or provided for as a matter of routine in the child’s EHC plan or statement of special educational needs. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c) (4)) This relates specifically to managers ensuring that mechanical restraint and sanctions are recorded in line with regulation. This also relates to children receiving a debrief, in line with their individual communication needs, which is recorded.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to—	20 February 2022

plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority;

that each child's relevant plans are followed.
(Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(b)(iii)(c))

This relates specifically to staff ensuring that communication methods advised in EHC plans are readily accessible and used throughout the day to improve communication.

This also relates to managers ensuring that any health needs are fully considered, with plans in place to meet them without delay when a child moves in.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that risk management plans include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks, including when to seek medical advice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure that staff do not routinely deprive a child of their liberty without a court order, such as a section 25 order to place a child in a licensed secure children's home, or, in the case of young people aged over 16 who lack mental capacity, a deprivation of liberty may be authorised by the Court of Protection following an application under the Mental Capacity Act 2005. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.63)
- The registered person should ensure that all health needs are recorded in the health plan and will be the basis on which the registered person will be expected to meet regulation 10(2)(a)(i) in the health and well-being standard for each child looked after in their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.4)

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: SC387148

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Fairfield Residential Limited

Registered provider address: 108 Whitworth Road, Rochdale OL12 0JJ

Responsible individual: Kendall Cope

Registered manager: Debra McGarrigan

Inspector

Sylvia Eboigbe, Social Care Inspector

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