

SC392549

Registered provider: Duty of Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private provider. The home provides care for up to three children who may have emotional and/or social difficulties.

During the inspection, the inspector spoke with all three children who live in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2016.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 February 2023

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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 22 June 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/06/2021	Full	Good
09/07/2019	Full	Good
12/06/2018	Full	Good
10/10/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make excellent progress from their starting points. This is attributable to the quality of care that is afforded to them by the staff, who know them well. One professional said, 'The children have made massive progress. The team have done a brilliant job. Staff are consistent and reliable, and they really invest in the children.'

Children enjoy trusted and secure relationships with the staff. All the children spoke with warmth about the staff. One child rated living in the home as 10 out of 10, and the other two children rated it as eight out of 10.

Seeking the views of the children and capturing memories by taking photos and recording activities in their life-story books are prioritised in the home. Children's meetings, monthly consultations and discussions with children are used to seek their feedback. Staff then respond appropriately to the children's requests. This means that children learn that their views are important and they will be listened to.

The home is decorated and furnished to a good standard. However, vital maintenance work remains outstanding. This has resulted in damp and mouldy walls in the home, and redecoration is now needed in several of the home's rooms. These tasks have been raised by the staff with the responsible individual on numerous occasions but have not been resolved. This does not provide the children with a warm and homely environment.

Children feel confident to talk to the staff if they have a concern or worry. They know how to make a complaint and where to access the home's complaints leaflets. However, when complaints are made, the manager does not inform the complainant of the outcome. This does not ensure that all parties are satisfied with the outcome of their complaint.

The children's bedrooms have all recently been redecorated and personalised to their specific taste. However, none of the children have lockable cabinets in their bedrooms. This means that they cannot store their personal items securely in their own bedroom.

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

Children say they feel safe living in the home and know they can speak to staff if they have any worries. The manager ensures that the appropriate safeguarding procedures are followed when incidents occur. Clear safety plans are then implemented to reduce the risk of incidents reoccurring.

Children's records, including risk assessments and behaviour support plans, are thorough and are of a good quality. They are regularly updated and include all known risks as well as clear strategies to mitigate any identified risks.

A minimum of four planned discussions with children take place each month, and they cover a broad range of issues. When incidents take place, the staff undertake direct work with the children to raise their awareness and make the children increasingly safer.

When children go missing from home, which is an infrequent event, staff follow the children's risk assessments and the missing-from-home procedures. Staff are proactive in trying to contact and locate the children. When the children return, they are sensitively welcomed back into the home. Return home interviews are undertaken by an appropriate person.

There are few consequences and physical interventions used in the home, which is demonstrative of how safe and settled the children feel. However, the records of consequences and physical interventions are not completed as required. Consequences are also not always restorative in nature, and when a physical intervention is undertaken, children are not offered the opportunity to have an advocate.

When bedroom searches are undertaken, children are not informed of this in advance. Consent is not sought, and the children are also not present during the search. This approach by the staff takes away the children's sense of safety and security within their own safe space.

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

The home is managed by a permanent, suitably experienced and qualified registered manager. The manager is passionate about her role and is aspirational for herself and her staff with regards to the standard of care that is provided to the children. The home is properly staffed by suitably vetted and qualified staff. There is an induction period in place for new members of staff.

Feedback received from family members and professionals during the inspection was overwhelmingly positive. Staff's commitment and the level of communication from staff were common themes in the feedback.

The manager has clear monitoring and auditing processes in place to ensure that the quality of care provided by the staff to the children remains of a high standard. However, the responsible individual's failure to take effective action to address shortfalls in the home, as raised by the manager, is impacting on the quality of care the children receive. This is due to the poor environment conditions, not the care that is provided by the manager and staff.

Supervision takes place on a regular basis; however, the quality of the recording of these sessions varies. Some records do not include any evidence of reflective supervision taking place, and they lack management scrutiny. The registered manager is also no longer receiving supervision from an appropriately experienced

and qualified person. This means that all of the staff, including the manager, do not have the opportunity to reflect on their experiences of caring for the children and make changes to their practice.

Shortfalls with regards to record-keeping continue. Some records are not signed and dated, while others contain minor inaccuracies. This means that the children's records are not accurate or helpful for them to read and understand their experiences and progress.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered persons 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 persons 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; 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)(f)) This specifically relates to the responsible individual and the outstanding maintenance tasks in the home.	15 April 2023
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. 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—	15 April 2023

details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use 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. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (3)(a)(v)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) This specifically relates to consequence records and physical intervention records.	
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a) (4)(a)(b))	15 April 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are provided with appropriate furniture, such as a lockable cabinet or drawers to securely store personal items, including any personal information. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.19)
- The registered person should ensure that rooms are only searched if the child has been informed or asked for their permission. Children should ideally be present during the search. Immediate searching may be necessary when there are reasonable grounds for believing that there is a risk to the child's or another person's safety or well-being. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.20)
- The registered person should ensure that those making a complaint are informed in writing of the outcome of their complaint. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.13)
- The registered person should ensure that there are systems in place so that all the staff, including the manager, receive regular supervision so they can reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person must ensure that all children's case records are kept up to date and are dated by the author of each entry. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

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: SC392549

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Duty of Care Limited

Responsible individual: David Heartfield

Registered manager: Susan Kells

Inspector

Paula Shepherd, Social Care Inspector

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