

SC400355

Registered provider: Social Care Services (Clayton) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a private organisation. It provides care for up to three children with social and/or emotional difficulties.

The registered manager has been in post since 2017.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 August 2022

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: 15 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/03/2022	Full	Good
16/01/2020	Full	Good
19/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
31/07/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

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

The home provides clean and spacious living accommodation for children. Two children were living at the home at the time of the inspection. One child was seen cooking and appeared relaxed in the presence of staff. Another child was observed to have more conflicting relationships with staff. Both children were seen vaping on the premises. The manager reported that children are spoken to about smoking. Support from specialist services is required to ensure that smoking cessation is offered to the children.

One child spoke to the inspector about her daily lived experience at the home. The child said that the home was okay, and she liked it. Her preference would be to return home. However, she is not sure of her future and where she would like to live. This child requires advocacy on her behalf to ensure that her wishes and feelings are acknowledged.

Some minor repairs are required to ensure the upkeep and maintenance of the home. One child's bedroom was very untidy and there was evidence of smoking paraphernalia in their bedroom. The manager informed the inspector that staff complete daily bedroom checks. However, the presentation of one child's bedroom did not evidence that staff complete daily checks. Children have a right to personalise their bedrooms and have furniture that is not based on an incentivised system. One local authority reviewing officer said that he would like to see some improvements in the quality of furniture for one child. A recommendation is made to address this matter.

General health needs are met and both children are registered with local primary care services. One child requires improved education and monitoring of his diet to ensure that he maintains a healthy weight. There was no structured plan in place to ensure that this child is working towards personal goals to help him improve his overall health and well-being. This child also struggles with his sleep and there was no plan in place to ensure that sleep-hygiene measures are in place.

Children who have struggled in mainstream education provision are now attending education. Children require updated education plans on their files to ensure that staff are aware of the learning targets and objectives. This also ensures that additional learning provision can be sourced for children who have previously missed education.

A parent said that she was happy with her child's progress and that her child was no longer missing from the home. The parent commented that staff keep her informed and facilitate family time. Professionals report good communication.

Staff ensure that children have an opportunity to share their wishes and feelings through regular consultation. Children have regular children's meetings; however, the recordings of these meetings are not legible and/or child friendly.

Doors locks were observed on internal doors. These locks could be used to restrict children's access to parts of their home. Although the manager reports that the door locks are no longer used by staff to lock rooms off to children, there was no evidence to demonstrate that staff were aware that the locks shouldn't be used.

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

Children have individualised risk management plans. However, the assessments are outdated and do not reflect the current risks impacting on children, for example children who are experimenting with substance misuse. Unsigned risk management plans by staff and children do not evidence that staff have a good understanding of concerns, or that children understand their own risks or the measures in place to support them.

A child who has a history of going missing from the home now has a noticeable decrease of missing incidents. This is evidence of the growing positive attachments with staff. However, one instance of missing from the home resulted in the child being missing for over 54 hours and required medical attention on return to the home due to an injury to her foot. The provider failed to notify Ofsted as a notification of this serious incident.

Staff report that phone checks are completed. However, children require thorough checks to ensure that effective monitoring takes place. This would ensure that children are safeguarded against potential exploitation online.

The quality of direct work and key-work sessions requires improvement. Conversations with children are reactive and in response to an incident. There was no evidence to suggest that discussions take place to help children manage their emotions, or adopt coping strategies that would help children to manage their emotions, despite recommendations from the specialist nurse for children in care. Children who struggle with their mental health do not access services to help build their emotional resilience.

The location risk assessment requires updating, to include areas in the community which are identified as areas of concern. This is particularly in relation to children who are at risk of criminal exploitation and substance misuse.

Allegations are investigated and there is evidence of liaison with the local area designated officer for safeguarding. In one instance, a staff member returned to work before the investigation was fully concluded by the designated officer. Children do not routinely have a written outcome of their complaint to help them understand that a satisfactory conclusion is reached and/or that their views are heard. This is a

failure to follow safeguarding procedures and has the potential to affect the child's ability to raise future concerns

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

The registered manager has been in post since 2017. The manager stated that he is often on shift due to staff shortages. The manager said that he liked to be on shift so that he gets to spend time with the children. However, this dual role takes the manager away from day-to-day management of the home.

There was significant lack of management oversight on children's records to ensure that documents were signed and that children had relevant and updated documents, for example risk management plans, health plans, education plans and care plans. Some recordings were difficult to read due to the hand-written records.

Staff report a supportive team environment. Staff supervision records have improved to ensure that staff get the opportunity to have reflective discussion. Team meeting minutes were, in some cases, not legible. Meetings lacked detail and did not evidence that children are discussed.

Several training needs were identified throughout the inspection. The training matrix evidenced gaps in updates of training for staff. One staff member had an incomplete health and safety questionnaire dating back to May 2020. Staff, including the manager, involved in allegations have not completed refresher training following a complaint. Staff would benefit from attachment and trauma training and online safety training to ensure they have a greater understanding of the children that they care for.

The home's statement of purpose requires updating to ensure that all staff are included in the document.

External monitoring of the service requires improvement to ensure that the views of children and key stakeholders are noted. This would ensure that the independent person provides a detailed evaluation of 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, 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 work as a team where appropriate; 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; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to 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— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and	30 November 2022

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)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h))	
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; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies; that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; that the effectiveness of the home’s child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(e))	30 November 2022
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children’s home at least once each month.	30 November 2022

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; and to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. A visit by the independent person to the home may be unannounced. 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. The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or	30 November 2022

there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	
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. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))	30 November 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are actively encouraged to read their records and to add further information to them. Children should be regularly reminded of their rights to see information kept about them and be given information about how they might be supported to access their records in later life. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 62, paragraph 14.6)
- The registered person should ensure that all children have access to appropriate advocacy support, and where possible this should be provided by a person that the child chooses. Children are entitled to an independent advocate to advise

them and ensure they have the support needed to express their views, wishes and feelings about their care and lives. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the standards,' page 23, paragraph 4.16)

- The registered manager should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. In particular, to replace handwritten records with typed records. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that staff have access to specialist training to help them provide additional support to the child, and to support their training needs. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the standards,' page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meet the needs of the children. In particular, children should have clean and tidy bedrooms and also have the opportunity to personalise their bedrooms. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the standards,' page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff encourage children to take a proactive role in looking after their day-to-day health and well-being. Where children have specific health needs or conditions, they should be supported to manage these, subject to their age and understanding. When a child needs additional health or well-being support, staff should work with the child's placing authority to enable proper and immediate access to any specialist medical, or psychological, support required, and challenge them through regulation 5 - engaging with the wider system, to ensure children's needs are met, if this doesn't happen. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the standards,' page 34, paragraph 7.10)
- The registered person should ensure that internal door locks are removed so that children can move freely within the home. Restraint includes restricting a child's liberty of movement by using internal door locks. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the standards,' page 47, paragraph 9.42)

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: SC400355

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Social Care Services (Clayton) Limited

Registered provider address: 31 Shaw Rd, Heaton Moor, Stockport SK4 4AG

Responsible individual: Annabella Foulkes

Registered manager: Robert McEwan

Inspector

Kamal Bhamra, Social Care Inspector

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