

SC400355

Registered provider: Social Care Services (Clayton) Limited

Assurance 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 or emotional difficulties.

The registered manager has been in post since 2017.

Two children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection date: 24 January 2023

Date of last inspection: 9 August 2022

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The care of children

The two children living at the home at the time of the inspection have lived there for over 12 months.

The staff are managing very complicated and difficult family relationships, which are affecting children's behaviours. Staff have tried many different interventions and engaged with other agencies over the last few months. For one child, this has not been successful. The situation for this child has declined, resulting in difficult and violent incidents.

There is much greater success with another child and, although family relationships are fragile, staff support, actions and the work of other agencies have brought about some stability and trusting relationships. One child said, 'I am very happy here. The staff are great, they listen and help me where they can.'

Through constant support from staff and advocating on their behalf, both children have a school place and are attending. One child attends very regularly and is making good progress.

The home looks tired and some areas, particularly the hallway, require redecoration and minor maintenance. One child has asked the manager for their bedroom to be decorated and for additional storage for clothes and personal items. Although agreed, progress on this is slow and the child is frustrated by the wait.

The safety of children

Staff take appropriate action to keep children as safe as they can. When children go missing, staff go out to look for them, including travelling frequently to the placing authority, which is 30 miles away and, on occasion, other parts of the country to look for children and encourage them to come home. One child has not been missing from the home for many weeks and has become more responsive to staff and their support, following a series of unfortunate and unforeseen incidents.

No child has made a complaint since the last inspection.

There have been several violent incidents at the home, and the staff have called for help from the police as they have been the subject of planned attacks. The manager recognises that this situation is getting worse, but understands why the incidents occur, and he and staff remain committed to safely care for the child concerned while there is ongoing discussion with social workers.

Each child has a lengthy and very detailed written risk assessment and risk management plan. It is not clear how staff can identify quickly what action they should take to protect children, or how easy it is to update risk assessments with new strategies when the existing ones are no longer effective, given the frequent violent incidents.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

The manager has met all the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection.

As a result of one recommendation, the manager has created a new form to ascertain children's views about their placement plans. One child has engaged with this, and some changes have been made to their plans and care arrangements. The manager has also introduced different tools and activity sheets to vary the conversation and activities carried out in direct work sessions, which has led to more engagement.

The home does not have enough staff, due to experienced staff leaving in the past few months. However, the vacancies are being covered by staff undertaking overtime and by staff from other homes within the organisation. This creates consistency for children, and the impact of this is limited as the children know the staff members. Two appointments have been made and the manager is hopeful that the new staff can start work soon.

The staff team is experienced, qualified and resilient. Staff reported that they are supported well by the manager, who holds regular staff meetings, briefings and reflective supervision sessions. The team has undertaken some training courses since the last inspection, and found the learning from one course on trauma and attachment has led to a greater insight into children's' needs.

An independent person visits the home every month and completes a report, which the manager finds helpful in improving the quality of care. However, the reports are not submitted on time, which limits Ofsted's ability to monitor the home effectively.

The manager has carried out a review of the quality of care, but this was submitted to Ofsted outside required timescales. The report does not include the views of children, their families or other professionals, or clear recommendations and actions the manager intends to take to improve the quality of care in the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/08/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
15/03/2022	Full	Good
16/01/2020	Full	Good
19/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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 independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— HMCI. (Regulation 44 (7)(a))	28 February 2023
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 quality of care provided for children; 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"). 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 (1)(2)(a)(b) (3)(4)(a))	31 May 2023
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—	15 March 2023

provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably;

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—

ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—

meet the needs of each child.

(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(i) (2)(a)(i) (3)(a)(i))

Specifically, ensure that children's bedrooms are decorated and that they have sufficient storage for clothes and personal items, and ensure that all areas of the home are decorated and well maintained.

Recommendations

- The registered person should revise the risk assessments to ensure that the staff can easily and quickly read the details of the steps they will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

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

Helen Humphreys, His Majesty's Inspector of Social Care

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