

SC411616

Registered provider: Calcot Services for Children Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned. It is registered to provide care for up to four children. The statement of purpose states that a therapeutic approach is taken in working with children, with the aim of enabling them to return to their family home or to move to alternative family placements or on to independent living.

The home has been without a registered manager since 31 December 2021.

Inspection dates: 30 and 31 May 2022

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 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: 8 December 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/12/2021	Full	Good
26/02/2020	Full	Outstanding
04/09/2018	Full	Good
05/12/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

At the time of this inspection, four children were living in the home.

Leadership and management and safeguarding arrangements in the home are inadequate. These failures have had a negative impact on the overall experiences and progress of children living in the home.

As a result of this inspection, a restriction of accommodation notice and two compliance notices have been served on the provider.

Staff sufficiency is a concern. One child commented that there are always different staff and this makes it hard to build relationships.

Children do not benefit from receiving the therapeutic care and support described in the statement of purpose. Fewer than half of the staff currently working in the home have received training in this model of care. This is compounded by a lack of information available to staff on how to meet children's needs. For example, some staff do not have sufficient understanding of the term 'trauma', and instead, view children's presenting behaviour as children being 'rude'. This failure to have sufficient staff with the required skills, knowledge and experience compromises children's care.

Staff support children to attend education and recognise their barriers to learning. Children are either enrolled in the organisation's school or attend specialist schools in the community. Two children are on reduced timetables. Tutors come to the home to reintroduce children to education, particularly when they have been out of school for a significant period of time. However, one social worker has noticed that routines have slipped due to a lack of a consistent staff team, and this has started to compromise one child's education.

Staff seek the children's views on topics such as meal choices and activities. However, a lack of planning and routine means that most of this engagement is reactive, often in response to children's behaviours becoming heightened.

Staff endeavour to support children to learn life skills such as cooking. Children discuss their plans with staff and these are appropriately shared with their social workers.

Children's health and well-being needs are mostly met. Children are attending routine appointments and specialist care as needed. Links with emotional well-being practitioners are strong. Excellent joint working with child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) means that a child's mental health needs are well

considered by key staff. One child's social worker commented on how well staff are responding to her current presentation around food.

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

Safeguarding arrangements in the home are inadequate.

Staff do not have the skills, experience or knowledge to manage children's behaviours. For example, boundaries are not always being implemented correctly. One social worker told the inspectors that a child is not always asked to hand in her phone, in line with a written agreement. This lack of routine and consistency has had a negative impact on the child's well-being. Children and staff comment on the poor use of the organisation's reward system, including some members of staff not understanding how it works or how it should be implemented.

Children have found the last few months challenging and have lost the trust of new staff. Incidents of children going missing from the home have significantly increased in recent months. Staff follow children and were seen to try to defuse anxieties to help children to return home safely. There has been some particularly positive work with the police in identifying the risk for one child, including challenging the police response when necessary. However, the lack of appropriate staff training means that staff are not knowledgeable in specific areas such as child sexual exploitation. This means that staff are missing early warning signs. For example, records refer to a male becoming a child's 'boyfriend'. This diminishes the identification of risks that the child may be facing. This lack of professional curiosity leaves children vulnerable and at risk.

Staff do not have the required skills and training to understand how to respond to incidents of self-injury, children who have an eating disorder, those who are at risk of using ligatures and those who might put themselves at risk by attempting to take an overdose. Although some positive joint working with CAMHS has taken place to help staff to understand specific motivations for self-injury, this alone does not equip the staff with the required skills. Consequently, staff do not have the required level of knowledge to understand and manage risks to children.

Children's plans lack detail and do not support staff to meet individual children's needs. For example, plans are not clear about how staff should support children who require one-to-one supervision. Grab sheets for emergencies, such as a child's attempt at self-harm or going missing from home, do not hold the right information, including emergency services details. In addition, the records of incidents are not clear and do not always match the staff named on the rota. This disorganised and chaotic approach compromises children's safety.

The home environment is well maintained and regular checks are carried out to ensure that fire safety is effective.

Staff who are recruited to work in the home are subject to all the appropriate checks, as part of safer recruitment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leadership and management of the home are inadequate. There has been no registered manager in post since December 2021. There has been a total failure of operational oversight from leaders in relation to the day-to-day care of children. Consequently, staff are not challenged when their approach falls short of good practice and children's welfare has been placed at risk.

Staff sufficiency is a concern. The high turnover of staff has left children without the required level of care to meet their needs. Five members of staff have left, leaving only two part-time members of staff and one waking night member of staff. Despite this reduction in core staffing, decisions have been made to move another child into the home. This practice does not promote children's well-being.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that staff receive adequate training, guidance or support to meet the children's needs. For example, not all staff have received ligature training, despite managers being aware that this is a risk for some children. This leaves children vulnerable and at risk.

A decision has been made that part-time staff are not expected to complete the level 3 diploma in residential childcare. This is a failure to recognise the requirement to ensure that all staff are appropriately qualified for their work with children.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that the home is managed in line with the statement of purpose. The lack of review has resulted in the statement of purpose containing many errors, including the registration details of the home.

When staff are brought into the home from within the organisation there is no formal induction. However, these members of staff are then expected to lead shifts. This poor preparation has a detrimental effect on the care that children receive.

Supervision does not support staff to develop their skills or knowledge. This is a missed opportunity to formalise and review staff development and exposes children to further risk when poor practice from staff goes unchallenged.

Management oversight and monitoring are poor. Records relating to behaviour management, and incident logs and daily logs are inaccurate. For example, the wording in physical intervention records is not specific and means that staff actions are open to interpretation. Some records confirming who is working in the home do not match the names on the staff rota.

Although leaders and managers notify Ofsted of significant events and incidents that occur in the home, inaccurate and misleading recording and a lack of transparency has resulted in Ofsted not having an accurate overview of significant events.

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— 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(d)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff are suitably trained to meet the needs of the children placed, and that there are a sufficient number of experienced staff to meet the needs of each of the children in the home.	3 July 2022
*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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))	3 July 2022

In particular, the registered person must ensure that there is suitable oversight of the home, including of all plans and records.	
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 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(e)(f)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the statement of purpose is reflective of the service provided in the home, that the staff are consistent and trained to meet the needs of the children in the home and that the quality of care is reviewed in order to reflect the progress children are making.	3 July 2022
The registered person must keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it. Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 16 (3)(a) (5)) Specifically, the statement of purpose must be updated to reflect the service provided and show which staff are trained in the therapeutic process described.	3 July 2022

A responsible individual must satisfy the requirements in paragraph (5)(a) to (c); and have the capacity, experience and skills to supervise the management of the home, or the homes, in respect of which the responsible individual is nominated. (Regulation 26 (7)(a)(b)) In particular, the responsible individual must be able to demonstrate they have the skills to provide suitable oversight of the home.	3 July 2022
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The registered person may defer the relevant date if the individual works, or has worked, in a care role in a home on a part-time basis. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d) (6)(b))	3 July 2022

Specifically, that staff who are employed part time may have the date deferred by when they need to have completed a suitable qualification, but that they must still undertake the qualification.	
The registered person must ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. (Regulation 33 (1)(a)) Specifically, to include all staff who work at the home.	3 July 2022
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))	3 July 2022

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff supervision records contain sufficient detail. Records should include details of the actions and outcomes of these meetings. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.4)

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: SC411616

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Calcot Services for Children Limited

Registered provider address: Advantage, 87 Castle Street, Reading, Berkshire
RG1 7SN

Responsible individual: Sarah Walton

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Jennie Christopher, Social Care Inspector
Emeline Evans, Social Care Inspector

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