

SC413078

Registered provider: Castle Homes Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned. It provides care and accommodation for two children.

The home has a suitably experienced registered manager,

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 5 October 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on our website.

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 July 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children are not protected and their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: 14 October 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
14/10/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
23/10/2018	Full	Good
06/06/2017	Full	Good
27/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Safeguarding concerns were identified through routine monitoring of this home by an independent visitor. On receipt of this information, Ofsted carried out a full inspection. This inspection found serious shortfalls regarding care and safeguarding practices.

Children living at this home have not complained about the quality of care provided, and their respective placing local authorities have not raised any concerns. However, there are widespread and systematic failures in the way that children are looked after at this home, which exposes them to risk.

Children are supported to engage in education which is tailored to their individual needs. They have opportunities to participate in a range of activities in the community and the home.

The home has recently had some redecoration and refurbishment. Children's bedrooms have been decorated to their individual tastes, which provides a homely feel. The home is clean and tidy. Resources are available for the safe management of COVID-19, such as hand sanitiser.

Contact between the children and those who are important to them is promoted. Children are supported to visit friends and family and to maintain these important connections with regular visits.

The two children who resided at the home at the time of the inspection have now moved to new placements.

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

Leaders and managers have not adequately monitored the quality of care being provided to children. They have not ensured that children are protected from harm.

Children who are already known to be at risk of harm and exploitation have not been adequately protected. Incidents of exploitation have been witnessed by staff but not responded to appropriately. Staff have failed to intervene and/or take actions to reduce risk.

Children's risk management plans lack detail. Information is out of date, inconsistent and sometimes incomplete. There is a lack of clear guidance to staff about how risks should be managed. For example, there is no risk assessment regarding children accessing Wi-Fi at a local public house to make contact with adults of concern. For another child, there is no risk assessment around multiple empty aerosol cans and other paraphernalia found in their bedroom. Staff lack sufficient safeguarding

knowledge to identify risks, and mechanisms are not in place for staff to discuss and escalate these concerns.

Children have been found to be drinking alcohol and smoking cannabis in their bedrooms. The staff team has not managed this effectively and has been unable to ensure safe childcare practice.

Going missing from the home has been a regular pattern for children. Staff are not effective in preventing children from going missing. Staff do not ensure that they know children's whereabouts or the people who children visit. This places children at risk of harm, particularly around criminal and sexual exploitation.

Managers do not ensure that independent return home interviews take place when children return to the home after a period of being missing. Managers do not ensure that children can speak to someone independent of the home or gather vital information from children who may have been exposed to harm.

The use of restraint is not always in line with regulation. One incident of physical intervention has been used to enforce compliance. This incident was not adequately addressed by managers. There is a failure to identify and challenge inappropriate practice.

Staff recruitment records are not well maintained, and there are gaps in information. This does not ensure the safe recruitment of staff and shows that management monitoring systems are ineffective.

Safeguarding concerns are not always reported to Ofsted promptly. This limits the regulator's ability to review safeguarding practice.

Staff do not always check the identity of visitors to the home. Failing to check the identity of visitors has the potential to place children at risk of harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The COVID-19 pandemic led to changes in the leadership and management of the home. These changes, although necessary, were not managed well. There has been a lack of senior management oversight of the arrangements. Managers have not always been visible or available to support the staff team. There has been a lack of management support for the home. This has contributed to incidents of poor childcare practice.

The shortfalls identified at the full inspection in October 2019 remain. These shortfalls relate to leadership and management and to safeguarding children. This raises concerns about the provider's capacity to make and sustain improvements.

The home is not sufficiently staffed to meet the needs of the children cared for and keep them safe. Despite identified risks to children, staffing levels have not been increased accordingly.

Staff undertake a range of mandatory and specialist training. However, leaders and managers do not have an overview of staff training profiles. This means that it is unclear whether all staff have the relevant training.

Poor staff practice has not been managed effectively by leaders and managers. The failure to address conduct and suitability concerns has contributed to children not being safeguarded against sexual exploitation.

Records and children's case files are of poor quality. There is a failure to record full information about incidents, and there are omissions in basic information. There is a lack of oversight and quality assurance from leaders and managers. Poor recording makes it difficult to track incidents and assess the quality of care provided.

Shortfalls in management oversight mean that leaders and managers have not been fully appraised of safeguarding concerns at the home and have been slow to acknowledge and respond to shortfalls in practice. This has had a direct impact on children's care and experiences.

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 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; 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)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(e)) This relates to ensuring that risk assessments are accurate, and that staff understand and implement each child's risk	28 August 2021

assessment effectively. Staff must understand their role in teaching and keeping children safe, particularly with regards to risks of exploitation.	
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; 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; 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)(f)(h)) This specifically relates to ensuring visible and accessible on-site management, with a focus on ensuring that the quality standards and regulations are upheld.	28 August 2021
Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing— injury to any person (including the child); serious damage to the property of any person (including the child).	28 August 2021

Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b) (2)) This specifically relates to staff's use of de-escalation techniques and ensuring that restraint is not used to enforce compliance.	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (3)(d)) The relates to ensuring that safe recruitment checks are undertaken prior to a staff member working with children and that there is evidence of safe recruitment procedures.	28 August 2021
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c)) This specifically relates to ensuring that there is clear evidence of training, supervision and appraisals.	28 August 2021
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))	28 August 2021
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—	28 August 2021

a child is involved in or subject to or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation.
(Regulation 40 (4)(a))

This specifically relates to the provider ensuring that safeguarding concerns and allegations are promptly referred to Ofsted and the designated officer.

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: SC413078

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Castle Homes Care Limited

Registered provider address: Fifth Floor, 80 Hammersmith Road, London W14 8UD

Responsible individual: John Anderson

Registered manager: Calvin Richardson

Inspectors

Amanda Ellis, Social Care Inspector

Sarah Orriss, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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