

SC453372

Registered provider: Park Blue Homes Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private provider. It offers care for up to five children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted in April 2013.

There has been no registered manager in post since July 2024.

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

Inspection date: 1 October 2024

Date of last inspection: 3 June 2024

Judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At these inspections, the inspectors 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

The assurance inspection was brought forward in order to address specific concerns or allegations received by Ofsted.

Ofsted identified the following serious and widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection:

- The children are cared for by a high number of non-permanent staff. Some new staff members work at the home for a brief period and leave with immediate effect. This means that children do not receive consistent care and are not able to form relationships with staff.
- There is no registered manager and there are staffing shortages. The management oversight is poor. The senior leadership team visits regularly and completes shifts in the home due to the staff shortages. However, the management oversight is poor and leaders and managers have not identified the safeguarding concerns for children.
- Staff do not have the necessary skills, qualifications, or experience to care for children. Therefore, staff are not proactive in de-escalating or supporting children when they are struggling to manage their emotions or behaviour.

Since the previous inspection, one child has moved into the home and one child has moved out in an unplanned way.

A high turnover of staff has negatively impacted on the care, progress, and safety of children. Children do not benefit from a stable staff team. Since the last inspection, children have been cared for by over 40 different members of staff who are either bank staff or have come from the provider's other homes. Consequently, children have very limited opportunities to develop positive relationships with staff.

A lack of consistent and experienced staff in the home, and a failure to manage children's complex needs, has led to staff leaving. There has been an increase in allegations and complaints; however, the manager has appropriately reported allegations to the designated safeguarding officer.

Staff do not know how to support children when they are struggling to manage their emotions or behaviour. There have been incidents where children have needed to be physically held to keep them and others safe. However, not all staff are trained to de-escalate incidents or to safely hold children. On one occasion, two members of staff did not intervene when a third member of staff needed their support. This does not help children or staff to keep safe, and compromises the relationship between children and staff.

Children's risk assessments do not include all known risks. Some risk assessments are contradictory, for example, around the staffing ratio for children. This means

that the manager cannot be reassured that staff are taking appropriate action to keep children safe. Additionally, children receive inconsistent responses from staff, which do not help children to feel safe or secure.

Children are not consistently supervised in line with their plans. One child had access to sharp objects on at least two occasions that resulted in serious incidents in the home. Additionally, on two occasions, children were left alone in the home when they were struggling to manage their emotions. One child was able to gain access to the staff offices, cause damage and shred their own records as staff did not know how to intervene to de-escalate the situation.

Children do not consistently attend education. Since moving to the home, one child still does not have a school or college to attend. This child said that they want to attend school and the manager has not effectively escalated or challenged the placing authority about their lack of education resource. For those children who do have an education placement, their lack of engagement is hindering any progress towards attainment. Additionally, staff do not consistently promote the importance of education to children. For example, staff told one child that they could return to the home rather than going into school. This means that children are not helped to attend education, which could negatively impact on their future life options.

Staff do not promote healthy routines for children. Children spend more time in their bedroom, and only briefly leave the room when specific staff members are there to support them. This has led to children withdrawing from education and having disrupted sleep patterns. Records of welfare checks or discussions with children do not provide reassurance that children's safety is regularly monitored.

Children do not have positive relationships with each other. One child was asked to return home to allow another child to go out due to staffing shortages. This was a contributory factor in a significant incident in the home. This means that children are not helped to understand, or develop friendships with, children who are sharing their home.

The manager and senior leaders have failed to ensure that children's records include all their statutory documents. These shortfalls have not been escalated to the placing authority by the manager and senior leaders. This means that the manager cannot be reassured that staff are following the child's current care plan.

There is insufficient oversight and scrutiny of which staff are caring for the children, particularly overnight. During an incident throughout the night, a member of staff, who was meant to be awake, was in a sleep-in room. This resulted in a delay in them responding to an incident where a member of staff was locked in a room by a child and needed their colleague's support. The manager could not confirm which staff were due to be awake or asleep on that occasion. Additionally, the manager had not identified this shortfall when reviewing the incident.

Children engage with some members of the staff team. However, there have been occasions when children have taken control of a situation, which has led to staff being injured.

There is no registered manager or responsible individual in post. Members of the senior leadership team provide day-to-day support to the interim manager. Although some of the shortfalls are known by senior leaders, the action taken has not been effective to resolve the concerns.

As a result of the shortfalls identified, a case review was held on 7 October 2024 and a decision was made to issue a compliance notice under regulations 12 and 13. Furthermore, the requirements made at the full inspection in April 2024 have been restated.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/06/2024	Full	Good
22/08/2023	Full	Good
24/05/2022	Full	Good
02/02/2022	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, The 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; 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 that the premises used for the purposes of the home are located so that children are effectively safeguarded. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(c)	11 November 2024
* 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	11 November 2024

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; and ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(h))	
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child’s behaviour, in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;	11 November 2024

communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; strive to gain each child's respect and trust; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same; and de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(viii)(ix)(x)(xi))	
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; and are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b))	11 November 2024
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; and if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c))	11 November 2024

The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child’s education and training targets, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training, and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; maintain regular contact with each child’s education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child’s education and training and to maximise the child’s achievement; raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child’s education or training provider and the child’s placing authority; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible; and help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child’s relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix))	11 November 2024
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children’s home. (Regulation 25 (1)(a))	11 November 2024

This specially relates to ensuring that any measures in place are agreed by the regulatory fire authority.	
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*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC453372

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Park Blue Homes Limited

Registered provider address: 38 Freemans Way, Harrogate HG3 1DH

Responsible individual: Post vacant

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Cat Makel, Social Care Inspector

Claire Webster, Social Care Inspector

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