

SC480655

Registered provider: The Place Young People's Company

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and operated by a private company. It is registered to provide care for up to four children who may experience social and emotional difficulties. Since the last inspection, two children have moved out of the home and one child has moved in.

The registered manager left their post shortly before the inspection. A new manager has been appointed and is undergoing recruitment checks. The home is currently being managed by the responsible individual with support from other managers in the organisation.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 August 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 7 November 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/11/2023	Full	Good
29/11/2022	Full	Good
06/10/2021	Full	Good
17/02/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive individualised care from staff and the ethos of the home resembles family life. Children and staff enjoy close and meaningful relationships. They spend time together doing activities and going on holiday. For example, one child travelled to a foreign country with staff and another child is planning a holiday in England. As a result, children feel cared for and have a sense of belonging.

Children enjoy good health. Children are helped to live a healthy and active lifestyle. For some children, an improved diet means they no longer need to take medication. This is good progress. Children's emotional and mental well-being is also well supported. Staff seek further support from specialists, such as mental health services. Therefore, children's overall health improves.

Children do well in education. Staff help children to learn and achieve through supporting with homework, advocating and encouraging children to attend and engage in learning and education. Two children have successfully passed their first year of college and are progressing to Year 2. Another child has been supported to return to school gradually with a personalised plan, helping him to enjoy school again.

Older children are well prepared to live independently. They are supported to learn essential skills such as budgeting, shopping and cooking. One child is learning to drive and has saved up for a car. Careful consideration is given to transition plans and children being able to stay in touch with people who are important to them. As a result, children feel well prepared and supported, and are hopeful for the future.

Some aspects of children's day-to-day care are not consistently recorded, and information is not always written in a way that is helpful to children. This is an area for development.

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

Children know how to complain. Children's concerns are taken seriously. Complaints are fully investigated, and children receive a prompt written response from managers. This helps children feel heard and valued.

The risks and vulnerabilities of children are well known by staff. Safety plans are up to date and regularly reviewed. They tell staff what to do and provide them with strategies in how to respond. Staff are skilled in responding to behaviours that are difficult to manage. This ensures an effective approach to safeguarding.

Children who present with self-injurious behaviours receive good support from staff to keep safe. If children require hospital treatment, staff remain with them. This helps children to feel safe and provides continuity of care. Staff help children to find effective

strategies in times of distress. For example, one child is supported to use a range of visual images on her bedroom door, informing staff how she is feeling. This enables staff to respond quickly to the child's needs and is helping to prevent further incidents.

Physical restraint is occasionally used as a last resort to keep children and others safe. The least restrictive measure and force are used. Children are spoken to after each incident and given an opportunity to express how it made them feel. However, the manager does not routinely discuss the incident with staff. This prevents the manager from reviewing the appropriateness of restraint practice effectively, and staff are not receiving the necessary support.

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

The management of the home has at times had a negative impact on team morale. The manager has been heavily involved in the day-to-day care of children and this has hindered her capacity to complete management tasks. For example, staff do not receive regular supervision. Therefore, staff are not receiving the support they need, and the manager is not able to review staff knowledge and practice regularly.

While there are monitoring and quality assurance systems in place, these are not robustly followed. The manager is behind on tasks that oversee the care of children, such as medication competency checks and a review of children's daily records. A review of the service has been undertaken and there is a plan in place to address these shortfalls, but time is needed for changes to be effective.

Staff have not received the necessary training to meet children's specific needs, such as foetal alcohol spectrum disorder and substance misuse. Therefore, staff feel they have lacked understanding and have found some behaviours too difficult to manage. This was rectified during the inspection and the relevant training has been organised.

The manager and staff have positive relationships with professionals and parents. The manager communicates well and works effectively in partnership with others. This ensures a collective approach to care and safety planning.

Learning from incidents and placement endings is used to inform practice. Staff are actively involved in learning reviews, helping them to feel heard and valued. Staff feel supported by the changes taking place and morale within the team is improving.

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 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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(h)) This specifically refers to staff having the right training in relation to children's needs and ensuring robust quality assurance and monitoring systems are in place that are used and reviewed regularly.	31 October 2024
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must ensure that—	31 October 2024

within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—

has spoken to the user about the measure; and

has signed the record to confirm it is accurate.
(Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (3)(b)(i)(ii))

This specifically relates to the manager undertaking debriefs with staff following a restraint.

Recommendations

- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping, and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: SC480655

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: The Place Young People's Company

Registered provider address: 2 Lymevalle Court, Lyme Drive, Parklands, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 6NW

Responsible individual: James Binyon

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Emma Dacres, Social Care Inspector

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