

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, six children have moved out of the home and six children have moved in. At the time of the inspection, three children were living at the home. Inspectors spoke with all three children.

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 an interim manager. The manager is not registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 July 2025

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 and young people are not protected, and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor.

Date of last inspection: 13 August 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/08/2024	Full	Good
07/11/2023	Full	Good
29/11/2022	Full	Good
06/10/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Children's experiences at the home are mixed. For example, some children have been harmed due to managers and staff's failure to safeguard them from risks such as exploitation and bullying. Other children who moved into the home more recently are settled and making positive progress.

Some children find relationships with staff difficult due to the high staff turnover and temporary workers. The inconsistency in caregivers makes children feel insecure and prevents them from developing meaningful relationships.

Children's information is not always recorded appropriately. On occasions, staff have failed to report safeguarding concerns in the correct manner. This caused delays in the manager responding to and managing risks to children.

Staff encourage children to live a healthy lifestyle through physical activity and healthy eating. For example, children are helped to cook nutritious meals, and they enjoy going to the gym. This helps to improve children's overall health.

Staff support children to do well in education considering their starting points. For one child who struggled to go to school, staff have supported them to return full time and complete their end of year eleven exams. For two other children who have recently moved to the home, the interim manager has been proactive in finding school places and apprenticeships.

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

Managers and staff do not keep children safe. Staff are not competent in safeguarding procedures. Risk management plans lack pertinent information to keep children safe. Managers and staff fail to identify risks to children and do not take effective action. As a result, three children have been victims of criminal exploitation and have moved out of the home for their own safety.

Staff do not respond effectively to children's needs and behaviours. Staff do not implement consistent rules and boundaries. For example, a senior staff member allowed two children to remain in the same bedroom unsupervised through the night. This poor safeguarding practice places children at potential harm.

Managers and staff are not effective in promoting peer relationships and protecting children from harming each other. One child has experienced instances of bullying from peers which also led to an unnecessary room search. This has emotionally impacted the child and affected their confidence and self-esteem.

Medication is not safely monitored or administered. For one child who takes prescribed medication daily, there have been shortfalls identified. For example, it is not consistently

given daily, and on one occasion, the medication was missed for eleven consecutive days. There have also been errors in the counting of medication.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There is an inconsistent and unstable staff team. The high staff turnover and use of temporary staff means children experience lots of different caregivers. On occasions there have not been enough staff on shift to safely care for children. This has increased risks to children.

Staff are not well trained or skilled in caring for children's individual needs. Whilst they receive some relevant training, such as working with traveller families and young carers, learning is not effectively put into practice.

The manager has safer recruitment processes in place and checks are undertaken to ensure staff are safe to work in the home. However, not all checks are undertaken robustly. For instance, managers have not assured themselves that a senior member of staff holds the relevant qualification.

Management oversight of the home is ineffective. Regular internal and external audits have not picked up on significant shortfalls and risks to children. Learning from incidents is not used to improve the service. This has exacerbated poor safeguarding practice.

The interim manager is making positive changes to develop staff and improve the service. However, time is needed to implement and embed these into practice.

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; 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 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(b)) This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that risk management plans identify all known and emerging risks, and they identify the strategies staff are to follow to manage and reduce risks to children. This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that staff know how to keep children safe, are competent in safeguarding procedures and that staff recognise and escalate safeguarding concerns for children.	31 August 2025

This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that staff provide appropriate supervision of children and support them to develop positive relationships with each other, and effectively address any signs of bullying.	
*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; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to 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)(d)(e)(h)) This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that staff have appropriate experience, skill and training to meet children's individual needs, and that staff's application of learning in practice is evaluated and monitored. This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring there are sufficient numbers of staff on each shift to safely care for children, and work to recruit and retain staff. This specifically relates to the registered person having effective monitoring and oversight of all aspects of the day to day running of the home.	31 August 2024
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular the registered person must ensure that—	31 August 2025

medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child; and a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(b)(c)) This particularly relates to the safe administration and recording of medication as per children's care plans.	
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 has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; 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. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b)(3)(b)(d) (4)(a)(b)) This particularly relates to ensuring proof of relevant qualifications are received and recorded on file as part of safer recruitment checks.	31 August 2025

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendation

- 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)

This recommendation was made at the last inspection and is restated.

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 Lymeale Court, Lyme Drive, Parklands, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 6NW

Responsible individual: James Binyon

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Emma Dacres, Social Care Inspector
Tazim Akhtar, Social Care Inspector

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