

SC481235

Registered provider: Individual Specialist Care Limited

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a small private organisation. It is registered to offer care for up to three children who may experience emotional or behavioural difficulties. The registered manager has been in post since 4 November 2019.

Inspection date: 28 March 2022

Date of last inspection: 3 November 2021

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged requires improvement to be good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.

This inspection was undertaken to review what action had been taken to meet the requirements raised at the last inspection. Ofsted found that the provider had taken sufficient action to meet the requirements breaches. However, several further requirements were raised during this inspection.

At the time of this inspection, one child had recently moved into the home. Another child had moved out of the home before their anticipated time. This was an unplanned move and her experience was not positive. Staff were not able to keep the child safe and they moved on quickly, following incidents at the home.

Staff fail to follow children's risk assessments. When children go missing, the registered manager and staff fail to take appropriate action and follow the home's missing from care protocol. For example, when one child went missing, staff did not complete local searches and contact the child's friends and family. Some staff are unable to demonstrate a good understanding of how to manage risk and keep children safe. This has the potential to increase the risk to vulnerable children.

Children's risk assessments are lengthy and lack focus on some important risks. In addition, written documents had not been updated following incidents. For example, known risks such as behaviours that have contributed to damage to property are not included in risk assessments. Furthermore, one child's risk assessment had not been updated for the use of an alarm on the child's bedroom door. The registered manager does not have good oversight. As a result, staff do not always have clear guidance and advice to keep children safe.

Staff do not always use key-work sessions well to help children. For example, staff have not helped a child to learn about gang affiliation, knife crime and child sexual exploitation. Furthermore, staff are not proactive in having important discussions and conversations with one child to help them learn about socially acceptable behaviour such as racism, despite concerns raised about the use of offensive language. As a result, children do not get early help and support to develop positive behaviours and relationships.

The home is not always well maintained and welcoming. Although children's bedrooms are personalised, these are not always maintained to a good standard. At the time of the inspection, one child's bedroom was observed to require a deep clean and their bedroom carpet was heavily stained and very messy. Maintenance work in the home has not been completed in a timely fashion. For instance, there are trip hazards and broken furnishing in the lounge that needs to be repaired. This practice does not create

a nurturing and homely environment for children.. The register manager took some action during the inspection.

Staff and the registered manager lock internal doors without good reason, but as a way of managing the children's behaviours. For example, the kitchen, lounge and dining room doors are locked and this is common practice. The registered manager has not reviewed this approach to ensure that such strategies are proportionate and necessary to keep children safe. As a result, this places unnecessary restrictions on children to move freely in their home and create an institutional impression of the home.

Some action has been taken by the registered manager to ensure that staff have received training in the 'Prevent' duty and equality and diversity. However, he has failed to ensure that all staff have received refresher mandatory training to update their knowledge and skills. For example, not all staff have received training in gang affiliation, knife crime and county lines. This means that there are gaps in staff's knowledge on how to keep children safe.

The registered manager's monitoring and oversight of the home requires further improvement. He has not ensured that staff have clear guidance and advice when managing children's risk and little oversight of missing-from-care risk assessments. The registered manager acknowledged this shortfall.

Action has been taken by the registered manager to ensure that staff receive regular supervision and appraisals. However, not all staff receive practice-reflective supervision as set out in the home's statement of purpose. For example, children's progress, needs and vulnerabilities are not discussed and tracked routinely in these sessions. This is a missed opportunity to help staff to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care.

The manager's review and oversight of physical interventions has improved and includes sufficient scrutiny to ensure that the use of restraint is necessary and proportionate. However, one record of physical restraint did not provide accurate information. For example, physical restraint records contained conflicting information on how long a child had been restrained. This has the potential to leave children vulnerable and compromises their safety.

The child recognises the positive care she receives from staff and how they help her. For example, she told the inspector about her positive relationship with a member of staff that had made her feel relaxed so that she could talk to them if she needed support.

Staff ensure that they are working with other professionals to promote children's emotional health and well-being. They understand the importance of promoting children's relationship with their family members. This support helps children maintain a sense of identity and positive emotional wellbeing.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/11/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
17/02/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
03/07/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
11/02/2019	Interim	Declined in 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, 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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— treat each child with dignity and respect; provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(iii)(vii)) This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of their children.	29 April 2022
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— an understanding about acceptable behaviour. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;	29 April 2022

encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; 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. (Regulation 11 (1)(b) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(v)) This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that they support children to keep safe.	
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 are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)) This particularly refers to staff ensuring that they follow	29 April 2022

advise in that risk assessments and that these are reviewed and kept up to 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— 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; 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)(h)) This particularly refers to the registered manager ensuring that all staff receive refresher mandatory training. It also relates to ensuring that they use internal monitoring systems more effectively.	29 April 2022
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)) This particularly refers to the registered manager ensuring that staff prepare children as far as possible when they are moving on.	29 April 2022
The registered person must ensure that— the privacy of children is appropriately protected;	29 April 2022

children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. Regulation 21 (1)(a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) This particularly refers to the registered manager ensuring that staff do not lock internal doors within the home.	
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the missing child policy") setting out— the steps taken, and to be taken, to prevent children from being absent without permission; and the procedures to be followed, and the roles and responsibilities of persons working at the home, in relation to a child who is, or has been, so absent. (Regulation 34 (4)(a)(b)) This specifically refers to the registered manager ensuring that the staff adequately respond to incidents of missing from home, and the manager evaluates the effectiveness of each response.	29 April 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that a record of supervision is kept for staff, including the manager. The record should provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with regulation 33 (4)(b). ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3).
- The registered person should ensure that staff provide accurate information on records of restraints. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59).

Information about this inspection

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full 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: SC481235

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Individual Specialist Care Limited

Registered provider address: Office No 4, Ground Floor Grove House, Grove Terrace, Walsall WS1 2NE

Responsible individual: Antony Cox

Registered manager: Anajiff Johnson

Inspector

Patrick McIntosh, Social Care Inspector

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