

SC486114

Registered provider: Life Change Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is privately owned. The provider states in the statement of purpose that they provide care for four children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2021.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 July 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

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

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 23 November 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/11/2021	Full	Good
20/06/2019	Full	Good
22/05/2018	Full	Good
20/09/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children move into the home in a well-planned and considered way. Staff invite children and their families to visit the home before children move in. This helps to reduce any anxieties they may have. Staff understand children's needs and families feel respected and listened to. One former foster carer said, 'Staff were caring and welcoming. The staff were really interested in getting to know him and asked for my advice. They respected that I knew him best.'

Children make good progress in all areas of their lives. They receive consistent care from an established staff team. Staff know children well and develop positive and trusting relationships with them. Children say that they feel safe, happy and listened to in the home. Staff act on children's wishes and views following feedback through weekly children's meetings, key-work sessions and children's questionnaires.

Staff prioritise children's education. Staff are proactive in identifying barriers to learning. They support children to overcome these. Staff re-engage children in education when difficulties arise. The manager has challenged decisions, to ensure that appropriate educational settings are sought for children when previous placements have put children at risk. Staff are ambitious for children to achieve their full potential. One child has completed their GCSEs and another child is waiting to start university after completing their A levels.

Staff promote children's hobbies and interests, both in the home and in the local community. Children enjoy horse riding, trampolining, cooking, playing pool, and attending football matches and music festivals. Children care for their own pets in the home. This supports them to develop a sense of responsibility.

Children spend time with their families and people who are important to them. Staff support children's emotional needs when they are experiencing difficulties with family relationships. One professional said, 'The staff have supported [child's name] really well in managing her relationship with her parents.'

Plans for children who are ready to move on from the home to live independently are well thought out. One child is remaining in the home until starting university. The home has facilities for children to live independently and staff support them in developing valuable life skills. This helps them to then live independently in the community. One professional said, 'The home has gone out of their way to support [name of child] with independence. They are flexible and accommodating.'

When children leave the home in an unplanned way, staff work hard to support them in moving on. For one child, the manager accompanied them to their new placement to ensure that they settled in and felt comfortable. Staff support the emotional needs of children remaining in the home when they have developed close relationships with those moving on.

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

Staff get to know children before they move into the home. Children are treated with respect, and they feel listened to.

Staff have a good understanding of children's risks and they respond effectively when new risks are identified. Children are involved in the development of risk management strategies. Staff carried out work with one child when emerging risks around fire-setting were identified. However, this risk has not been reflected in the child's risk assessment documents. This would not alert new staff in the home to this area of need.

Staff take appropriate action in the event of children going missing from the home. The number of incidents of children being reported as missing from the home have reduced. Debriefs and follow-up work after any incidents of going missing are effective. This improves staff knowledge and understanding of the reasons for children going missing from the home. Reflective practice encourages children to understand the associated risks of going missing. However, children's records do not include relevant information to assist staff in locating children when their whereabouts are unknown.

Children say they feel safe in the home. Positive and respectful relationships with staff support children to manage and regulate their emotions. This minimises incidents of challenging behaviour. There have not been any incidents of physically holding children and there are clear strategies in place for staff to de-escalate situations.

Positive reinforcement and incentives promote positive behaviour. When incidents of negative behaviour occur, staff are proactive in educating children through focused key-work sessions and restorative practice. When used, sanctions are fair and proportionate. Children's safety is promoted by inviting local police officers to undertake workshops on specific topics.

Risks for children moving into the home are explored by the manager. Consultation with previous carers provides a thorough understanding of children's risk before moving in. The manager has foresight of potential difficulties and he implements strategies to manage these. Extra support for children manages anxieties of new children moving into the home.

Staff recruitment practices are not thorough. Gaps in employment are not routinely identified or explored for new members of staff. This potentially places children at risk.

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

The manager is dedicated to providing good-quality care to children in the home. He knows and understands the children well. He is confident in challenging professionals,

to promote opportunities for children to engage in education and remain in the home until independence. However, the manager has submitted his resignation from the company. He has planned the timing of his departure to correspond with one child moving on from the home. This is to support the child to have a positive move from the home to university.

Some requirements set at the last inspection are not met. These are restated. One child does not have an up-to-date care plan and the manager has not adequately challenged the local authority to provide this. The independent visitor does not evidence regular consultation with children and those involved in their care.

Management oversight of children's records is not thorough. Follow-up work after an incident has not been undertaken for one child. Records are not always signed or dated. Furthermore, an identified risk for one child is not accurately reflected in their records.

The manager has maintained a consistent and stable staff team. Staff feel valued and supported. Team-building events and staff incentives improve morale in the home. This supports staff to overcome instability and repair fractured relationships within the team. Staff say things have improved and the team now support each other. One member of staff said, 'Things have massively improved since the manager has been in post.'

Staff benefit from regular supervision and training specific to children's needs. However, not all refresher courses for mandatory training have been completed by all staff. The manager has not completed any mandatory refresher training.

Internal quality of care reports provide a good overview of the progress that children make. They include feedback from children and those involved in their care. Children's progress is monitored through monthly trackers and audits. Areas of further need are identified in relation to children and the manager takes appropriate action when required. However, monitoring has not identified some shortfalls in respect of staff training and follow-up work with children being carried out.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff – 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, they must 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 (c)) Specifically, this relates to obtaining up-to-date care plans and placement plans from children's placing authorities within suitable timescales. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	18 August 2022
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; 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)(b)) Specifically, risk assessments should include all identified risks for children.	18 August 2022

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 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. (Regulation 13 (1) (2)(c)) Specifically, all staff should be compliant with all mandatory training, as outlined in the training matrix.	18 August 2022
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)) Specifically, missing-from-care protocols should include up-to-date information on where a child may be, which will support staff to locate children when they go missing.	18 August 2022
When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (2)(a)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	18 August 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that recruitment of staff is safe. Specifically, that any gaps in employment are identified and addressed. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure there is effective oversight of follow-up work undertaken and that records are dated and signed. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.4)

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: SC486114

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Life Change Care Limited

Registered provider address: Pennine View, Off Trafalgar Street, Burnley,
Lancashire BB11 1TQ

Responsible individual: Julie Stirpe

Registered manager: Joseph Black

Inspector

Claire Hobbs, Social Care Inspector

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