

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. It is registered to provide care for up to four children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2021.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 19 January 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 November 2021

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: 20 June 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/06/2019	Full	Good
22/05/2018	Full	Good
20/09/2017	Full	Good
12/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are happy and settled at the home. They have developed positive relationships with a staff team that is nurturing and genuinely cares about them. Consequently, all children make progress in many areas of their lives and have improved their life chances.

Social workers and children's families spoke highly about the care children are provided with and the progress they make. One parent said, 'The work they do with [name of child] is brilliant. The difference from her last placement to now is massive. She can express herself. She has been supported to find her own feet. She is more relaxed and confident.'

Children feel listened to. They are involved in decisions about their care and planning for their future. One child has requested to remain living in the home until they reach adulthood. This is being considered by the manager and the placing authority. Regular house meetings provide children with opportunities to share their views about their home and the care they receive.

Children's education is a priority, with most children achieving 100% attendance. Children are encouraged to aspire. They are involved in school drama productions and pupil mentoring, and one child is applying to university. Where children have barriers to learning, the staff team works persistently with education providers to agree suitable arrangements and to promote children's interest in their education.

Children engage in regular talking therapy, equine therapy and reiki to promote positive emotional well-being. Children are supported to develop coping strategies to help them regulate their emotions effectively. The manager promotes a diverse and inclusive environment, where children are respected. Staff are sensitive and responsive to children's identities, encouraging them to express their individuality.

Children are encouraged to pursue their interests and hobbies, such as horse riding, joining a netball team, attending festivals and caring for their own pets. Children's self-esteem, confidence and social skills have significantly improved because of these opportunities. Older children are supported to develop their independence skills. One child has secured a part-time job, while they continue their studies at college.

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

Children feel safe living at the home. The staff team provides children with the skills to keep themselves safe. Consequently, there has been a significant reduction in risks for all children and they make safer choices. Children do not go missing from the home, there have been no serious incidents and restraint is not used.

Staff have a good understanding of children's risks. They work consistently with behaviour-management plans that reflect children's views about strategies that are effective and should be used to support them. The staff are intuitive, their responses to children's risk-taking behaviour have improved and they are proactive in their safeguarding practice.

Staff use effective de-escalation techniques to reduce risks during incidents and ensure that, where necessary, children are provided with increased support and monitoring. Key-work sessions educate children effectively about how to keep themselves safe. The staff team also works proactively with additional agencies to promote children's safety, including local police officers, the child sexual exploitation team and neighbourhood watch.

Positive reinforcement is used to promote children's good behaviour. This is done using incentives and targets. Any sanctions used are fair and proportionate. Children are encouraged to engage in restorative work and repair relationships with others.

There have been no children admitted to the home since the monitoring visit in January 2021. The manager has improved the matching risk assessment, so that it is more robust. It considers risk-taking behaviour that could impact on children already living in the home and involves thorough consultation with relevant professionals prior to a child being assessed as suitable to move into the home.

Children's relationships with each other are managed well. There is a good balance of children socialising together and having their own space. Bullying is no longer a concern in the home. There have been no complaints made by children, which shows that children can talk to staff and raise any concerns informally.

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

The manager's oversight of children's risk assessments is not robust. Risk assessments contain conflicting information about steps that should be taken to safeguard children, relating to mobile phone safety and supporting children to manage independence time in the community. Although this has not affected children's safety, it is essential that the manager provides staff with clear guidance so that they can implement consistent boundaries.

In addition to this, the manager's monitoring of incident records is not thorough. Children and staff do not always receive debriefs following an incident and, on occasions, the manager has not reviewed incident and sanction records. The manager should have a thorough oversight of all records, to enable him to identify any lessons learned to improve practice.

The manager has brought positive change to the home. He has worked hard to stabilise the staff team and promote safe practice. He has supported the staff team to reduce children's risk-taking behaviour and has improved staff's understanding of

effective safeguarding. He recognises the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has plans to develop and address these areas.

The manager is confident in challenging other professionals where he feels a decision made about a child's care and education does not promote their life chances. That said, he has not demonstrated sufficient escalation with placing authorities to ensure that all children have recent care plans and review-meeting minutes on file. This is important, so that all staff are aware of and work to the objectives set out in children's care plans.

Staff are positive about working in the home and feel well supported by the manager. They are provided with regular practice-related supervision and training that is specific to children's needs. Team meetings are child-focused and purposeful. The manager aspires to develop the staff team now that the team is more settled. A recommendation has been made to ensure that the manager sustains the current staff-team stability and continues to promote the continuity of care for children.

The manager's review of the quality-of-care report provides a good account of the progress children have made. However, it does not include feedback from children, families, staff and social workers about their experiences of the home. Equally, the independent visitor does not evidence regular consultation with children and those involved in their care to consider a full evaluation of the quality of the service provided.

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
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, 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 review-meeting minutes within suitable timescales, from children's placing authorities.	6 January 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 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 have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;	6 January 2022

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)(c)(e)(h)) Specifically, the manager should ensure that there is evidence of children and staff having received thorough debriefs following incidents, to be able to identify any lessons learned and effective strategies to improve staff practice. The manager should oversee all incident reports and records of sanctions, to ensure that they are thoroughly evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the incident management and the suitability of a sanction implemented. The manager's oversight of risk assessments and behaviour-management plans should be thorough, to ensure that they do not contain conflicting information and guidance in relation to children's current needs and risk management.	
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))	6 January 2022
In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it. The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (2)(b) (5))	6 January 2022

Recommendation

- The registered person should demonstrate every effort to achieve continuity of staffing so that children's attachments are not overly disrupted, including ensuring

that the employment of any temporary staff will not prevent children from receiving the continuity of care that they need (regulation 31(1)). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 51, paragraph 10.1)

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

Cheryl Field, Social Care Inspector

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