

1264286

Registered provider: Platform Childcare Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to four children who present with challenging complex behaviours. The manager was registered with Ofsted in November 2017, when the home opened.

Inspection dates: 14 to 15 May 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

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
<p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>provide to children personal items that are appropriate for their age and understanding. (Regulation 6(1)(a)(b)(2)(b)(viii))</p>	25/05/2018
<p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8(1)(2)(a)(viii))</p> <p>In particular, children should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in a daily routine with suitable structured activities.</p>	25/05/2018
<p>The enjoyment and achievement standard is that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p>	15/06/2018

<p>that staff help each child to—</p> <p>develop the child’s interests and hobbies;</p> <p>participate in activities that the child enjoys and which meet and expand the child’s interests and preferences; and</p> <p>that each child has access to a range of activities that enable the child to pursue the child’s interests and hobbies.</p> <p>(Regulation 9 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(b))</p>	
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child’s health. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(d))</p>	15/06/2018
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a))</p>	29/06/2018
<p>If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home—</p> <p>the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b))</p>	25/05/2018
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety. (Regulation 32 (1))</p>	31/05/2018
<p>The independent person must produce a report about a visit (“the independent person’s report”) which sets out, in particular, the independent person’s opinion as to whether—</p> <p>children are effectively safeguarded; and</p> <p>the conduct of the home promotes children’s well-being. (Regulation 44 (4)(a)(b))</p>	29/06/2018

Recommendations

- Children should be provided with appropriate furniture, such as a lockable cabinet or drawers to securely store personal items, including any personal information. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.19)
- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

In particular, behaviour management plans and risk assessments should include up-to-date information that is consistently implemented.
- Homes set up for emergency placements as indicated and details in their Statement of Purpose will require sufficient staff trained and skilled in the admission and care of children, where their full background may not be known. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 57, paragraph 11.6)
- Children's homes have a duty to provide access to a telephone that children can use privately. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.17)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

The children living at the home have only recently been admitted. Therefore, the children's progress from their starting points is limited. Some children engage well with staff who spend time with them. However, improvements to staff practice are required to fully meet the children's needs and support them to fulfil their potential.

The lack of daily routine and stimulating educational activities for the children fail to support those waiting for admission to their educational provision. For children who are to undertake school examinations, there is little evidence of staff supporting them to prepare and revise. Some children spend the day alone in their room, and others engage in general conversation. This lack of structure does not support children to prepare for readmission to their educational provisions.

The children's living environment is unwelcoming, in some areas. The cooker has no splashback, so grease is visible on the walls, the cooker hob is stained and some kitchen cabinet doors are damaged. Some areas of the home require painting and there is some damage to walls. The children can access internal communal areas. However, the external area of the home is bland and uninviting. Therefore, at times these areas are not fully used by the children. The children can decorate and personalise their bedrooms. However, they do not have a lockable cabinet or drawer. This shortfall does not enable the children to securely store their personal items.

The children have their basic needs met. However, a confusion between the manager and the provider around budgets for basic necessities, such as shopping, activities and the decor of the home, has resulted in the children at times reporting that they are bored and staff having access to only limited resources to engage them. As a result, the children's participation in activities outside of the home is limited. There are no books, games or in-house activities for the staff to use to stimulate and develop the children's interests. This shortfall was addressed during the inspection, and additional funds were allocated for staff to use in order to meet children's needs and promote their well-being.

The staff seek the children's views, and records demonstrate that they discuss relevant and individual areas of concern to ensure that the children are aware of potential risks. However, some views are not fully implemented. Although the staff encourage children to eat healthy meals, information about a preference for non-spicy food and certain vegetables is not consistently considered. As a result, children's choices are limited and the healthy food option is often not eaten by the children.

The children are supported to have contact with their families. Staff transport children when required and ensure that they communicate with family members, including brothers and sisters, and carers. Children have access to a telephone. However, it is

broken and has not been replaced, so those children who do not need to have their calls supervised and for whom no risks have been identified have to ask a member of staff if they can use the office telephone.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

The staff and manager are proactive in their response to children who they believe may go missing from the home. The staff inform the police about children who are at risk at the point of the child's admission, and put plans in place to discourage incidents of children going missing. When children do leave the home without permission, the staff follow them and report serious safeguarding concerns swiftly to the appropriate agencies. However, despite these actions, some children do go missing.

The fire risk assessment is not up to date, as the assessment was conducted when no children were living at the home. This is of particular concern, as some children smoke in their rooms. There has been a failure to consider the associated potential hazards to the children and staff and the actions required to reduce the risks identified.

The children's individual behaviour management and risk assessment documents are not up to date. The information in these documents is conflicting. Therefore, on occasions, children receive different responses from staff.

Physical intervention is rarely used, and only when it is the last resort during an incident. Records clearly detail the action taken and seek the views of the children. Debriefings consider the learning that is to be implemented in future practice.

The recruitment practice lacks rigour. Although the provider undertakes all of the required checks to ascertain the suitability of a potential employee to work with the children, the manager conducts interviews alone. Although the impact on children is minimal, this shortfall in recruitment lacks thoroughness and is not good practice in recruitment.

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

The manager is passionate about his work. The professionals contacted during the inspection commented on his effective communication with them and his proactive practice in safeguarding the children. Due to some serious safeguarding incidents and a newly established team, the manager has focused on ensuring that those children at risk are at the forefront of his practice. However, this has resulted in other areas of practice at the home requiring improvement and means that the statement of purpose has not been fully implemented.

External monitoring of the home takes place monthly and identifies areas in which practice can be improved. However, the independent person does not provide the manager with their opinion of the effectiveness of safeguarding the children. The report

fails to provide the manager with the independent evaluation of practice that is required.

The staff receive a sufficient induction, during which they read the home's policies, shadow shifts and receive mandatory training. However, most of the children admitted to the home have arrived prior to their expected admission date. Only the manager has the experience, skills and training to manage the children when their admissions are not planned.

The manager works well with professionals who are linked to the children. Professionals speak highly about the manager's communication and commitment to the children. The staff support this view, and appreciate the support and guidance that he provides. The majority of staff are qualified and have prior experience of working with children. This means that children receive support from suitably qualified staff.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: 1264286

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Platform Childcare Ltd

Registered provider address: Suite 32 Anglesey Business Centre, Anglesey Road, Burton-on-Trent DE14 3NT

Responsible individual: Zamir Lal

Registered manager: Leon Brandon

Inspector

Natalie Burton, social care inspector

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