

SC478707

ERA Care Limited 5921904

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is one of a small group run by an independent provider. This home provides care and accommodation for up to four children, irrespective of gender, who may have behavioural and/or emotional difficulties.

The home was closed for 18 months before reopening in July 2019. The new, suitably qualified manager has been registered since 1 July 2019. This is the manager's first registered manager post.

Inspection date: 19 November 2019

This monitoring visit

This home was closed for 18 months before reopening in July 2019. In October 2019, Ofsted undertook the first full inspection since the home reopened and judged the home as inadequate. Concerns about care practice, safeguarding and the leadership and management of the home led to Ofsted serving a notice of restriction of accommodation and two compliance notices.

The primary purpose of this monitoring visit was to ensure that the provider is complying with the notice restricting accommodation and has met the actions specified in the compliance notices. The home is currently empty. One child moved from the home within a few days of the last inspection and another child moved out four weeks later. No children have been admitted since the last inspection. The provider is complying with the restriction notice.

At the last inspection, concerns regarding staffing numbers, staff deployment and staff's skills and experience were raised. Since the last inspection, no further staff training has taken place. Concerns about the number of appropriately trained and qualified staff have increased since the last inspection. This is because all the staff, except for the manager, have left their employment at the home. The home is therefore not equipped to provide care and support to children.

Lack of effective risk assessment and helping children to understand risk were identified as an area of concern at the last inspection. Some work has started on improving risk assessments and evidencing some discussion with children about keeping safe when on a planned activity. One risk assessment that was of concern at the last inspection was reviewed at this visit. The manager has updated one child's risk assessment to include important information of relevant risks regarding road safety and antisocial behaviour. However, despite clear indications that a child who was due to move on was going to go missing, including a statement by the child of their intent to go missing, the staff did not develop any strategy or take positive action to prevent this. The child therefore placed themselves at potential risk of harm by travelling independently back to their home area, which is a significant distance away from the home. The records of this event are not held in a central and clearly accessible place and a record of a telephone call made to the manager by the child is not documented. Poor recording of significant events impedes effective monitoring and limits the provider's ability to ensure that the children receive effective and responsive care.

The home continues to require redecorating to provide children with a homely and nurturing environment. Spillage damage can be seen on the kitchen wall, the bathroom window is broken, paintwork is flaking off, radiator covers require repairs, there are many bare hooks in the lounge where pictures used to hang and the children's bedrooms require furniture.

The manager has reflected on safeguarding situations and is able to identify what she would now do if she had concerns regarding a member of staff. However, she has not undertaken sufficient training and professional development to improve her knowledge and skills. As a result, she was not able to demonstrate that she has the skills and experience to manage the home effectively.

Internal monitoring of the home is ineffective. The manager has begun to introduce some monitoring tools for incidents. However, these did not identify the shortfalls in recording as noted at the last inspection.

This is the manager's first registered manager post. The provider has not ensured that the manager has received effective supervision, support and challenge.

Organisational monitoring arrangements are poor. The home has had only two independent visits, rather than the required minimum of four, since reopening the home in July 2019. Both visits were announced, therefore staff had time to prepare for the visit. These visits lacked rigour. The visit reports failed to give an insight into the standard of safeguarding and the quality of care. The report of the most recent visit, which was carried out after Ofsted had judged the home as inadequate and taken enforcement action, does not give any sense that the visitor was aware of these concerns.

Many requirements from the last full inspection are restated. This is because they

are not met or are matters which were not reviewed as part of this inspection.

The leadership and management of the home are poor. Consequently, the actions set out in the compliance notice relating to leadership and management are not met. The manager and responsible individual have not demonstrated sufficient evidence of improvement or capacity to drive future improvement. The restriction of accommodation remains in place and is subject to ongoing monitoring. Ofsted is considering its next steps in relation to the provider's failure to meet the actions in this compliance notice.

Progress has been made to address the safety of the building. The open gas cupboard has been secured. The radiators are now working and are secured to the wall. The fire door to the kitchen has been repaired and the fire doors are kept closed. The local fire officers have visited, and although they made suggestions for improvement, indicated that they are satisfied with the fire management arrangements.

The manager has updated the location risk assessment to reflect the dangers of the road and strained relationships with local residents.

Although the provider has met some of the actions in the compliance notice relating to the protection of children, a number of actions remain unmet or could not be evidenced by the provider. These aspects have been raised as requirements at this monitoring visit.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the home.

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 02/10/2019 | Full | Inadequate |
| 25/01/2018 | Interim | Sustained effectiveness |
| 05/07/2016 | Interim | Not judged |
| 12/04/2016 | Full | Inadequate |

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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—</p> <p>meet the needs of each child; and</p> <p>enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6(1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(i)(ii))</p> | 02/12/2019 |
| <p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;</p> | 02/12/2019 |

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| <p>encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful;</p> <p>help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship;</p> <p>strive to gain each child's respect and trust;</p> <p>de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(xi))</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— that staff—</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies;</p> <p>that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so</p> | <p>02/12/2019</p> |

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| <p>as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b))</p> | |
| <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;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;</p> <p>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)(d)(f)(h))</p> | <p>02/12/2019</p> |
| <p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that arrangements are in place to—</p> <p>ensure the effective induction of each child into the home;</p> <p>manage and review the placement of each child in the home;</p> | <p>02/12/2019</p> |

| | |
|---|------------|
| <p>and</p> <p>plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority. (Regulation 14(1)(a)(b)(2)(b)(i)(ii)(iii))</p> | |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and</p> <p>any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises—</p> <p>is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home;</p> <p>is necessary and proportionate;</p> <p>is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and</p> <p>allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iv))</p> | 02/12/2019 |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>the name of the child;</p> <p>details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;</p> <p>the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;</p> <p>the name of the person who used the measure ('the user'), and of any other person present when the measure was used;</p> <p>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the</p> | 02/12/2019 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| <p>measure; and</p> <p>a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;</p> <p>within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ('the authorised person')—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.</p> <p>(Regulation 35(3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)(iv))</p> | |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that the following items, which may be kept in electronic forms are kept in an accessible manner—</p> <p>records of the use of measures of control, discipline or restraint (see regulation 35);</p> <p>children's case records (see regulation 36).</p> <p>(Regulation 38(h)(i))</p> | 02/12/2019 |
| <p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40(4)(c))</p> | 02/12/2019 |

Recommendations

- As set out in regulations 31-33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguard children and minimise potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC478707

Provision sub-type: children's home

Registered provider: ERA Care Limited 5921904

Registered provider address: Unit G22 Allen House, Station Road,
Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire CM21 9JX

Responsible individual: Stephen Milton

Registered manager: Jane Coulson

Inspector

Joanna Heller: social care inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2019