

2510090

Registered provider: Nml Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private provider and is registered to provide care and accommodation for three children who have social and/or emotional difficulties.

The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced. She was not present during the inspection and no longer works in the home.

This is the home's first inspection.

Inspection dates: 29 to 30 January 2020

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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This is the home's first inspection		
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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>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>protect and promote each child's welfare.</p> <p>(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(i)(ii))</p>	27/03/2020
<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.</p> <p>(Regulation 8 (1)(2)(a)(viii))</p>	27/03/2020

<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>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.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i))</p>	<p>27/03/2020</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 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>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(c)(d)(h))</p>	<p>27/03/2020</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>27/03/2020</p>

<p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home’s statement of purpose.</p> <p>(Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a))</p>	
<p>The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which—</p> <p>is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children’s home from abuse or neglect; and</p> <p>sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect.</p> <p>(Regulation 34 (1)(a)(b))</p>	27/03/2020
<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 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>	27/03/2020

<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 maintain records ('case records') for each child which—</p> <p>include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child;</p> <p>are kept up to date; and</p> <p>are signed and dated by the author of each entry.</p> <p>(Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))</p>	27/03/2020

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

There are currently no children living in the home. Since the home was registered in June 2019, three children have lived in the home.

Children's relationships with each other were destructive. Staff did not effectively intervene in these relationships and, therefore, children's outcomes have been poor.

Children did not have school places or engage in education in the home. The registered manager attempted to escalate the issue of school places but with no success. Children also refused to engage with their independence programmes. The registered manager and senior staff did not provide meaningful guidance about how to re-engage children and were unable to effect any change. As a result, children's opportunities to learn and to develop important life skills were limited.

Staff have not managed children's transitions from the home well. Two placements ended with little or no notice due to significant incidents. This means that children did not have time to process leaving before they moved on, and their understanding of their time in the home is incomplete.

Staff have not ensured that children's views and wishes inform changes in practice in the home. The registered manager and staff have not been creative about how to engage with children, and the registered manager rigidly adhered to formal meetings, even when these were clearly not working well. The result of this is that children have not had a forum for their voice and so their engagement further decreased.

The home is well furnished and welcoming. Staff work hard to keep it this way. Where fixtures, fittings and the fabric of the building have been damaged, this has been quickly rectified by managers and owners, as they are committed to having a positive environment for children.

Despite the large number of difficulties staff have faced in the home, they spoke fondly of the children and have tried their best, with the limited support they have had, to engage children.

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

Staff do not have up-to-date information about children's risks. Where risks are identified, these are not added to risk assessments in a timely way. It is not possible to ascertain which staff have read risk assessments. The registered manager of the home has not addressed this shortfall. This has meant that staff have not been able to keep children safe.

The registered manager has not adequately risk assessed children arriving into the home. Pre-placement compatibility assessments list concerns but are not clear about how staff can work with these risks to reduce them, or about the impact they will have on other children living in the home. Therefore, when children have arrived at the home, staff have not had essential information to work effectively with them or to manage the impact of their arrival on other children already living in the home.

Staff do not write comprehensive plans for children. Children's plans are unclear, and they contradict other key documents, such as risk assessments. This means that effective approaches to help children develop have not been in place, and children have not been helped to address their behaviours. Progress for children has been limited.

Staff records of restraints and incidents are inadequate. They are confusing and lack key details, which makes management oversight of incidents difficult. Despite the registered manager being given a useful form, which prompts staff to give the necessary detail, its use was not implemented. Staff have not routinely signed records, and different members of staff's roles in incidents and restraint cannot be determined. This means that, should children want to see records of their time at the home, it will be difficult for them to understand what happened, why it happened and who was involved. This lack

of clarity does not help young people to understand their time living in the home or help the registered manager to monitor and review staff's management of incidents.

Despite significant shortfalls, staff have shown commitment to children. They persevered with a child who presented significant challenges in order that this child had a suitable placement to move on to. While this was not successful, the network around the child recognised the significant challenge to staff while they tried to secure a more specialised placement.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The registered manager was not present during the inspection. She was on leave and left the following week.

There are widespread failures of management and leadership in the home. Management monitoring and oversight have not identified and addressed practice shortfalls. Incident records lack guidance for staff and indicate that managers did not know how to address serious concerns. The lack of constructive professional challenge to staff has had an impact on staff development and their confidence in their work.

The registered manager's oversight of risk was poor. She did not take responsibility for ensuring that risk assessments and plans were updated when new behaviours were seen. The registered manager did not share essential information about children's behaviours and risk with staff prior to them moving into the home. The assessments completed by the registered manager were not accurate and were over-optimistic. On one occasion, this meant that the correct staffing levels were not in place from the outset when a child moved in. This left children and staff highly vulnerable.

Staff do not routinely sign to confirm that they understand policy and procedures, and there are no other measures in place to confirm staff's understanding of these. There are, therefore, some key areas where there is a lack of clarity. For example, all staff are aware that they need to share safeguarding concerns with the safeguarding lead, but they do not know where to record their concerns. The registered manager cannot be assured that staff are therefore working to the policy and procedures of the home, which are in place to protect children and support their progress.

The registered manager has not provided regular supervision to staff. Where staff have had their probation extended, there is no additional support put in place to make expectations clear and support staff to develop as the registered manager expected them to. Staff feel that the lack of support and negative responses from senior staff have meant that they are not sure who they can go to for help. As a result, this limits staff development, and their practice has not improved.

Staff have not received training to ensure that they can provide care which meets the aims and objectives of the home's statement of purpose. This means that staff lack the skills to effectively help children who come to live in the home.

Staff spend time reflecting when children leave the home. This is good practice. However, the reflective records do not lead to measurable actions or changes in practice.

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 differences made to the lives of children and young people. 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: 2510090

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Nml Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 253 Alcester Road South, Kings Heath, Birmingham, West Midlands B33 9DJ

Responsible individual: Darren Smallman

Registered manager: Julie Smith-Jones

Inspector

Karol Keenan, social care inspector

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