

1183173

Registered provider: TLC Youth Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to four children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, the home's registered manager had tendered her resignation and was on holiday ahead of leaving her employment on 31 May 2021. A new manager has been appointed and she was present during the inspection.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 25 to 26 May 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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: 18 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/02/2020	Full	Outstanding
23/10/2018	Full	Outstanding
02/05/2017	Full	Good
04/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

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

Children are settled and like where they live. Most children have built friendships with each other and are confident to speak to some of the staff members about their feelings. Feedback from wider professionals and family members is that children are doing well overall and are making progress educationally. Children are encouraged to participate in hobbies and develop their own styles and interests.

Although children are routinely praised for their behaviours, there is little oversight by managers to evaluate whether children are making progress holistically. This lack of evaluation means that children are not given the opportunity to reflect on their progress or enabled to set goals that they can work towards.

Where children are in close relationships, few boundaries have been put in place to keep children safe. Although this is an area that has recently started to improve, overall, there have not been enough tailored discussions with children to help them understand what healthy relationships are. Staff do not always respond to children in a consistent way that meets both their emotional and developmental needs.

Staff have not always modelled harmonious relationships with each other. Although children have not formally complained about this, they have recognised these strained relationships and shared this information with staff.

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

Children have mobile phones, and there are safety contracts in place which have been agreed with each child. These plans for safe mobile phone use are regularly reviewed. Children are rarely involved in behavioural incidents and, when these do happen, restraint practice is seldom used. Staff keep relevant professionals and family updated when children are missing from the home, and appropriate outreach support is sought when needed. If children are at immediate risk, staff take appropriate and timely action to keep them safe.

Children's risk assessments and behaviour management plans are in place but not all staff regularly review these documents. Children are not enabled to recognise and respond to risk in an age-appropriate way because structured discussions about risk do not take place regularly with the children. This prevents children from learning how to keep themselves safe.

Although the children need to have sanctions in place, the language used to explain why sanctions are given is sometimes written in a way that blames the child and makes them feel shame. Managers have not always reviewed incidents from the

perspective of the child, which means that managers and staff do not use this as an opportunity to learn and develop practice.

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

Leaders and managers carefully consider admissions in deciding which children should live together. This works well and children experience good placement stability at this home and often live here for a long time. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the registered manager was able to retain a permanent staff team, which is positive.

The registered manager has resigned from her post, and an acting manager has recently been appointed. The registered manager and the new manager worked together for a short period to facilitate a good handover. There are some managerial shortfalls, and the acting manager has devised an action plan to try and address these.

Some staff felt supported by the registered manager, but not all staff. The staff team has not been harmonious, and there has been tension. Some children commented that the registered manager did not make enough effort to spend time with them. The children did not like this. Despite these concerns, no staff or children complained to the responsible individual. The feelings of children and staff have now been discussed and changes to practice are planned as a result of these discussions.

Supervisions and appraisals have not been organised in a way that enables full discussion, including reflective practice. Furthermore, some staff have signed supervision and appraisal records even though they have not agreed with the contents. Confidential information about staff members has been left in view in a shared office space and read by other staff members.

There has not been adequate upskilling within the senior management team, which has resulted in care for children not being monitored effectively. Although children have plans in place, there is little evidence of staff working alongside children to help them to understand their plans.

In addition, there have been a few instances of recording errors when staff have administered medication to children. While this has not had any serious consequences thus far, it has the potential to do so.

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 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 work as a team where appropriate;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to 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>demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—</p> <p>research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and</p> <p>feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and</p>	20 July 2021

<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)(b)(c)(e)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h))</p> <p>This relates to the need for better management oversight and monitoring within the home. There is not enough planned, preventative, collaborative work with children that focuses on their well-being and safety. The progress of children is not well evaluated. Children require more consistent care that is child centred and therapeutic in its approach.</p> <p>There needs to be clear expectations for staff regarding supervision, whistle-blowing and accountability.</p>	
<p>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home.</p> <p>In particular the registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child.</p> <p>(Regulation 23 (1) (2)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the appropriate recording of medication when being given to children.</p>	<p>20 July 2021</p>

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: 1183173

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: TLC Youth Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 19 Harrier Park, Northampton, Northamptonshire
NN4 0QG

Responsible individual: Duncan MacKenzie

Registered manager: Rebecca Nike

Inspector

Andi Lilley-Tams, Social Care Inspector

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