

SC039213

Registered provider: Stellakis Mitiadous

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home and provides care for up to six children aged 11 to 18 years who have experienced a wide range of trauma.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2014.

This inspection had a blended approach occurring both on and off site, and involved meetings with children and staff. Feedback was received from social work and educational professionals and two parents. A staff questionnaire was also shared for those staff who were not on site but wished to contribute their views.

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.

We last visited this setting on 1 February 2021 to undertake a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 17 to 18 August 2021

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

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

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

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 20 December 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/12/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10/07/2019	Full	Good
17/07/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There are currently six children living at the home. They have lived there between three months to nearly two years. All the children have made good progress across a range of areas. Progress includes reducing their offending behaviour and dependence on alcohol. This is evidenced by a child who said, 'Staff are the best, they really understand my difficulties'. In addition, an independent reviewing officer described the staff team as attentive and supportive.

Children said that they understand and value the consistent and effective behaviour management at the home. Weekly financial incentives are focused on key individualised goals, such as returning home on time. Children can earn extra pocket money for doing additional chores and appreciate the opportunity of giving back via a restorative chore if poor behaviours occur.

Effective partnership work with parents supports good behaviour from children. Staff discuss and share behaviour management techniques with parents where appropriate. Recently, this included the effective use of bringing a cup of coffee to a child in the early morning, to encourage school attendance.

Children feel heard and represented. A child spoke of his pride at working with staff to choose and plan the home's recent summer holiday. Another child worked with staff and his independent reviewing officer to formulate a successful plan to remain living in the home following his 18th birthday. This will allow him to complete his education and move to a less supportive setting at his own pace. However, children do not feed into staff performance appraisals, limiting the manager's assessment of staff interaction with children.

Children enjoy safe and managed time with family and friends. In some cases, this helps to progress plans for them to return home, and, in all cases, it helps to reduce the number of times that children go missing from the home.

Children learn and develop valuable independence skills while living at the home. Staff prioritise the importance of children developing their cooking and budgeting skills. Children are proud of learning to cook for themselves.

Achievement in education is a major strength of the home. This is supported by the absence of internet connectivity in the home during school hours. One child proudly spoke of receiving a national award for his academic attainment. All the children are due to engage in a range of educational programmes in September 2021. For some, this is for the first time since they moved into the home. Programmes range from apprenticeships to formal college courses.

The home environment requires attention. The garden fence and windows are in need of repair. The garden area is messy and untidy. However, staff acted to remove hazards from the garden during this inspection.

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

Children told the inspector that they feel safe living in the home. They are proud that they have reduced risk-taking behaviours, such as going missing from the home. This is attributed to the help and support offered by staff.

Children's risk assessments are clear, concise and child-centred. Risk assessments are known and understood by both staff and children. They offer clear and helpful guidance for staff about how they can support children when they are struggling. Successful strategies include supporting children to manage their behaviour via self-soothing techniques.

Risk assessments are informed by well-structured and regular keywork sessions with children. These sessions focus on children's individual circumstances and presenting needs, for example recent contact with family or the dangers of committing offences while subject to court orders. Effective keywork sessions give children the opportunity to express their feelings and think through the consequences of their actions.

The home's risk assessment of the local area lacks an evaluation of potential child sexual exploitation and gang activity locally. This limits the manager's ability to assess the suitability of new children moving into the home.

Collaborative working with other agencies is positive. The manager and staff have an established relationship with a local police officer, who regularly shares information about potential risks in the local community and children's known associates. The manager recently shared concerns with a placing local authority about the potential criminal exploitation of the child. This enabled the local authority to apply for a protective legal order.

The response from staff when children go missing from home is good. Staff understand and enforce each child's missing from home plan. Children usually remain in touch with staff when they are away from the home. When this does not occur, staff ensure that independent return home interviews occur swiftly and that children receive support at a vulnerable time.

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

Leadership and management of the home requires improvement due to shortfalls in case recording, guidance on welcoming visitors to the home and delays in the reporting of serious incidents to Ofsted and the local authority designated officer.

Despite the concerns, the leadership and management of the home is stable. The registered manager is supported by a long-standing deputy manager who has worked at the home for 12 years. The management team is supported by a quality assurance manager who is a qualified social worker and provides oversight of children's risk assessments and care plans.

Managers have responded effectively to advice and guidance from the allocated inspector. This has led to improvement in the management and recording of restraints in the home.

Managers do not respond promptly to significant incidents or follow the required reporting and recording procedure. Leaders and managers informed the local authority designated officer of a significant incident four months after it had happened. This limited the oversight of the incident and guidance about the action taken by the provider. In addition, there was a delay in Ofsted being informed of a further significant incident that limited the regulator's oversight of the home and preparation for this inspection.

Restraint practice requires improvement. A child supported a staff member inappropriately during a recent physical intervention. In addition, staff failed to record the incident appropriately. This incident posed a potential risk to the child concerned. Furthermore, this limited the management oversight and evaluation of the effectiveness of the restraint and the debrief with the child and staff member concerned. Despite this, the child's records indicate that the provider acted swiftly to safeguard the child subject to the restraint and support the other child who was involved.

Leaders and managers are valued and appreciated by children and the staff team. Leaders and managers advocate early for children when they are struggling and ensure that support such as independent advocacy is provided to them. This supports placement stability for children and develops their relationships with staff.

Staff require clearer guidance on the verification of visitors to the home. At present, they do not verify the identity of visitors under the age of 18 to the home, irrespective of their presentation or the circumstance. This poses a potential risk to children living at the home.

The assessment and admission of new children moving into the home is good. This is evidenced by the low levels of placement disruption and the positive peer relationships formed between children. When difficulties occur between children, staff act quickly to mediate and ensure that concerns are quickly addressed.

The requirements and recommendations from the last inspection have been addressed. This has led to improvements in the recording of the wishes and feelings of children, healthier eating, access to advocacy and a more coordinated response when children are missing from home.

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</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— 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— 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 has sufficient staff to provide care for each child. (Regulation 13(2)(c))</p> <p>In particular, the home must ensure that all staff receive physical restraint training.</p>	5 November 2021
<p>The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard).</p> <p>When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1)(2))</p> <p>This is with reference to the specific risk posed by gangs and child sexual exploitation in the local area.</p>	5 November 2021
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p>	5 November 2021

<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>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;</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. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a))</p> <p>In particular, to ensure that the home adheres to the host local authority's guidance on the investigation of allegations and concerns.</p>	
<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— ensure that staff—</p> <p>provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. (Regulation 6(2)(b)(vii))</p>	<p>5 November 2021</p>

In particular, the provider must ensure the maintenance of the garden area.	
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to sexual exploitation;</p> <p>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious;</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or</p> <p>concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4))</p>	5 November 2021
<p>The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out—</p> <p>how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home. (Regulation 35 (1)(a))</p> <p>In particular, the management and recording of physical interventions.</p>	5 November 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that performance appraisals consider the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and the views of the young people in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 60, paragraph 13.5)
- The registered person should ensure that children are encouraged to develop positive relationships with others both in and outside the home. However, staff should be alert to the possibility that children may be at risk from such relationships. They should ensure that staff have clear guidance concerning the

verifying the identity of visitors to the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.14)

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: SC039213

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: n/a

Responsible individual: Stellakis Miltiadous

Registered manager: Abubakaar Sesay

Inspector

Barnaby Dowell, Social Care Inspector

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