

1228092

Registered provider: PSS Care Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties. It is one of three homes that are run by a private organisation.

The suitably qualified and experienced manager registered with Ofsted in December 2021.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 May 2022

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: 14 November 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/11/2019	Full	Good
12/06/2018	Full	Good
08/08/2017	Full	Good
06/09/2016	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

The home temporarily closed from May to December 2021. Since the home reopened, three children have moved in and two children have moved out. Both children who moved out lived as the only child at the home. One child was living at the home at the time of the inspection, having moved in shortly before the inspection.

The manager has not ensured that the needs of children who have moved to the home could reasonably be met. The children's needs were not matched to the location of the home or the skills and experience of the staff. The manager quickly ended both children's placements. One child moved out within three weeks of moving in and another after two months. The pre-admission assessment information for at least one of these children clearly indicates that their needs were highly complex and beyond the staff's skills and experience to manage. As a result, despite the good intentions of staff, the home has not provided stability for children.

The children whose placements were ended were both from outside the local area and were of minority ethnic heritage. One child, who was struggling with their mental health, commented on their feelings of isolation living in a predominantly white area. Some staff individually took actions which supported the children. However, there was insufficient strategic planning and consideration of how particular cultural needs would be met. Children's records provide limited information on their heritage, uniqueness and personal identity.

Although staff attempted to support children's health and well-being, because children have only lived at the home for a short time the opportunity for them to make progress with their health and education has been limited. Some of the children experienced significant emotional well-being issues which were outside of the staff's skills and experience to manage. As a result, the staff were unable to engage the children in education or effectively support their physical and emotional health.

The staff are individually caring and well intentioned. The child currently living at the home has settled well. The staff have forged positive and supportive relationships with them. This child is being supported to maintain good health and positively engage in education. The child is enjoying the company of the staff and the activities that they arrange.

The house is well decorated and maintained. It provides children with a warm and welcoming home. However, a broken garden table requires removal and replacement.

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

The provider is aware that children's local mental health services are under great pressure and struggling to meet demand. However, the location risk assessment has not been reviewed and updated to reflect this. This does not prompt consideration of the risks when accepting children with emotional well-being concerns such as self-harm. There are no strategies in place to reduce the negative effect that lack of access to these services may have on children living at the home. The inability of the staff and partner agencies to meet one child's escalating mental health needs contributed to the provider ending their placement.

Children's individual risk assessments and behaviour management plans sometimes lack clarity regarding action to be taken by staff when children go missing from the home or self-harm. As a result, staff are not consistently aware of strategies to reduce risks.

The provider has not consistently ensured that recruitment checks are carried out with sufficient rigour and professional curiosity. One staff recruitment file lacked a full employment history. This was addressed by the provider during the inspection when drawn to their attention. However, the lack of full employment history meant that an employment gap was not identified and explored at the point of recruitment. This is of particular concern, as shortfalls in recruitment have been raised with the provider previously.

The staff have developed positive relationships with local safeguarding professionals, which help to promote children's safety and well-being.

Due to the complex behavioural needs of some of the children who have lived at the home, physical intervention has taken place on many occasions. Staff have received training in de-escalation and physical intervention. They are clear about the threshold for restraint, and each incident record is reviewed. The records of restraint are not always sufficiently clear. On occasion, separate restraints which are not part of the same incident are recorded as one incident. This means that there is lack of clarity about what happened, where and when it happened and who was involved. Consequently, it is difficult to identify any emerging patterns and trends.

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

The suitably qualified and experienced manager registered in December 2021 at the point that the home reopened following its temporary closure. The provider has ensured appropriate management oversight at points when the manager has been absent.

The home has a mix of new and more experienced staff. Staff who have worked in a children's home for more than two years hold a suitable level 3 qualification.

There are a suitable number of staff on duty to meet the children's needs. However, the inspector noted one occasion when two inexperienced probationary staff were the only staff on duty at night. Neither of these staff had completed training in supporting children with autism spectrum conditions or attention deficit disorder, despite these being identified needs of the child accommodated at the time.

The records are not of consistently good quality or organised well. Some records lack clarity on events and the actions taken to support children. The home is moving from a paper to an electronic recording system. This has presented some challenges while staff become familiar with systems. As a result, some children's records have been unintentionally overwritten and relevant information removed.

The manager has, on occasion, struggled with the quality of communication with partner agencies. However, the home has worked with partner agencies to try to provide the children with a more positive ending, and allow placing authorities the time to locate more suitable placements.

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 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 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>In particular, ensure that children's individual risk assessments and behaviour support plans provide clear guidance to staff.</p> <p>This was raised at the last visit and is restated.</p>	27 June 2022
<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; and</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p>	27 June 2022

<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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(f))</p> <p>In particular:</p> <p>ensure that there is always a member of staff on duty who has completed their probation and who has completed training to meet the children's specific needs;</p> <p>ensure that accurate records are available which evidence the support that the children receive.</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 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. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a))</p> <p>In particular:</p> <p>implement an effective documented matching system to review the needs of children at the time of placement and identify how the home will meet these needs;</p> <p>ensure that there is documented full consideration of the particular needs of children from minority ethnic backgrounds and of those children placed from out of the local area.</p> <p>This was raised at the last visit and is restated.</p>	<p>27 June 2022</p>
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p>	<p>27 June 2022</p>

<p>employ an individual to work at the children's home; or</p> <p>if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that a full employment history is obtained prior to employment and that any gaps in employment are explored.</p>	
<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). (Regulation 46 (1))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that the review is completed in accordance with the non-statutory advice about the location assessment process. Furthermore, ensure that the review identifies any risks presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these in relation to the strength of local mental health services.</p>	<p>27 June 2022</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should provide a nurturing, homely environment. In particular, ensure that broken garden furniture is repaired or removed and replaced. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are clearly recorded individually to enable effective review and the identification of any patterns and trends. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

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: 1228092

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: PSS Care Group Limited

Registered provider address: 284 Chase Road, London N14 6HF

Responsible individual: Frederik Booysen

Registered manager: Yvonne Shaw

Inspector

Joanna Heller, Social Care Inspector

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