

1254308

Registered provider: Homes2inspire Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private company that is owned and operated by a national charity. It provides care for up to five children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The registered manager is currently away from work. The home is being led by an acting manager, who is not registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 August 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: 9 November 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/11/2021	Full	Good
07/01/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
10/09/2019	Full	Good
19/02/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

This home is not yet good because the progress and experiences of children are variable. Some children have had positive experiences. However, others have experienced difficult relationships with their fellow residents, which has resulted in them being placed at risk of harm. Missing-from-care incidents for children between May and July 2022 were significant. Direct work undertaken with some children has not been sufficient or effective in reducing risks to children.

Between the months of May and July 2022, the staffing ratios in the home, as outlined in the statement of purpose, were not sufficient to meet children's complex and sometimes competing needs. Safeguarding children who were missing had rightly taken priority. However, this meant that some children felt frustrated by the lack of one-to-one time with staff. Children felt frustrated by their activities being compromised.

In response to the challenges, the acting manager took decisive action. Some children have very recently moved on from the home, due to the risk children were posing to each other. Since that time, the children who continue to live in the home have reported positively about enjoyable activities and trips they have been on. Additionally, they report improved relationships with staff.

Although most children's educational progress has been limited, staff remain persistent in their support to help children attend school or alternative provisions. For those children who do not have a full-time school place, staff ensure that educational activities are scheduled to assist with their learning and development.

Staff support children to be healthy through diet and physical exercise. Staff also support children to be proud of who they are. Staff praise children highly for their achievements, no matter how small. This helps children to feel good and proud of who they are as unique individuals.

Some older children who have recently moved on from the home have been well prepared for the next stage of their life. One child, who is now a young adult and has recently moved out of the home into their own accommodation, felt that the help and support from staff was very good. They reflected that staff had really pushed them to develop independence skills and said, 'I did not realise how good the support had been until I left. Staff prepared me well and I am now successfully living in my own place.'

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

Staff and managers regularly update children's risk and behaviour support plans. These help staff to safeguard children in many aspects of their lives. For children who have been assessed as being at risk of exploitation, risks are tracked and assessed on a multi-agency basis. However, children's behaviour support plans do not provide staff with clear guidance regarding behavioural triggers. They fail to set out the work required with children to help reduce the risk of exploitation.

Children's relationships with each other have not always been safe. There have been incidents of bullying. On one occasion, a child was physically harmed by a peer. Staff have been proactive in responding to such incidents to help ensure that children are safe. However, staff have not ensured that meaningful direct work with children regarding bullying or following incidents consistently takes place. This is a missed opportunity for children to reflect and learn from incidents at critical times and to help reduce risk.

Although there has been a significant increase in incidents of children going missing from care, staff remain vigilant. They take measures to locate children and welcome them back home without delay. Staff always ensure that external return home interviews for children are completed. However, the local authority does not always share the outcome of these interviews to help the manager and staff with future safety planning for the child.

Children are motivated to improve their behaviour through incentives and behaviour support strategies implemented by staff. Staff are good role models, which helps children to learn positive behaviour. Children benefit from this predictability. It helps them to understand what is expected of them and how to better regulate their emotions.

Physical intervention is used a last resort, when all other de-escalation efforts have failed, and children are placing themselves and others at risk. Detailed records are kept of incidents. Managers undertake debriefs with staff and children. The manager scrutinises incidents to ensure that practice in relation to restraint remains safe, proportionate and appropriate.

On one occasion, the practice of staff fell below what is required. However, the acting manager was proactive in her response. The manager's safeguarding knowledge and prompt response minimised the impact of an instance of poor practice on children.

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

The acting manager and deputy are caring and committed. They work well as a team. They have led the staff team through a very difficult period. They have been successful in maintaining high staff morale. The acting manager's and deputy's

enthusiasm and passion to make a difference to children's lives are commendable. This motivates the team of staff, who feel very well supported and valued.

The acting manager and deputy are reflective practitioners. They actively learn from experiences and incidents, for example in relation to placement matching. The management team has reflected that their matching process had not been robust enough. They recognise that admitting some children in close succession made it more difficult for them to settle and form positive relationships with staff. The management team fully understands that ineffective matching has contributed to some children having some negative and harmful experiences. In response, the acting manager and deputy, alongside senior leaders, have reviewed matching processes. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this work.

Staff undertake a full range of training before starting work. Training opportunities then continue throughout each staff member's career. The staff have monthly 'learning circles' and regular reflective supervision. This helps staff to learn and develop their confidence and skills to meet the needs of children.

Partnership working with external professional agencies is a strength. All external professionals spoken to were complimentary about the levels of communication they have with managers. The acting manager has been instrumental in initiating regular multi-agency meetings in response to the significantly high numbers of missing-from-care incidents and increasing exploitation risks for children. This has informed multi-agency safety planning.

The acting manager and deputy have a solid understanding of the home's strengths and what needs to improve. They use external and internal monitoring systems alongside children's views to inform service development.

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 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>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>help children develop skills to resolve conflicts positively. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(iv))</p> <p>This specifically relates to responses to bullying in the home.</p>	23 September 2022
<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>help each child understand how to keep safe. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii))</p> <p>This specifically relates to children's behaviour risk support plans providing clear guidance regarding exploitation risks</p>	23 September 2022

and how to help and support children where this risk has been identified.	
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home;</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>This specifically relates to placement matching and ensuring that children are only admitted to the home following robust assessment as to whether children’s needs can be met in line with available staffing and in accordance with ratios outlined in the home’s statement of purpose.</p>	23 September 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. The home should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should ensure that staffing levels meet the needs of children and can respond flexibly to unexpected event or opportunities. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 54, paragraph 10.15)

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: 1254308

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Homes2inspire Limited

Registered provider address: Lumonics House, Valiant Office Suites, Valley Drive, Swift Valley Industrial Estate, Rugby CV21 1TQ

Responsible individual: Craig Whitchurch

Registered manager: Rebecca Blacker

Inspector

Rachel Griffiths, Social Care Inspector

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