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Registered provider: Nurture Childcare Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned by a private organisation. The provider states in their statement of purpose that they can provide care and accommodation for up to five children with social and emotional difficulties.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2022

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 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: 11 January 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/01/2022	Full	Good
21/09/2021	Full	Inadequate
11/03/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
27/06/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

There are significant shortfalls in safeguarding practice, management of risk and the leadership and management of the home. Children's safety, well-being and progress have been affected. Staff do not always understand children's individual needs and relevant plans. Furthermore, the overall experiences and progress of children are compromised by poor safeguarding practice.

Since the last inspection, a number of staff have left the company and there are an insufficient number of experienced, skilled and permanent staff working in the home. Staff shortages mean that there are not always staff with a mix of appropriate skills and experience on shift at any one time. Care is therefore being provided by an inconsistent staff team that cannot provide safe care or build relationships with children. Children say that they never know who is going to be working in the home. 'There are a lot of strangers.'

Children do not have access to a full-time education programme. For two children, their timetable has been reduced to allow the two-hour journey to school each day. For another child, there is no plan in place or any expectations around attending education daily. One child remained in their bedroom until late afternoon, without any encouragement from staff to engage in any informal learning.

Leaders and managers have made no attempt to establish links with education providers or the headteacher of the virtual school, to try to arrange alternative services for children. The delay by leaders and managers has limited opportunities for children to access appropriate education.

Children do not have the opportunity to access specialist health and well-being services. The manager has not responded in a timely way to children's health needs. The care provided is not supporting children sufficiently to make sense of and understand their previous experiences of trauma and neglect.

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

There are serious and widespread failings in the understanding and management of risk. Leaders and managers do not respond appropriately to risk and do not always ensure that there are effective strategies in place to minimise or mitigate identified concerns. Children living in the home have therefore suffered harm.

Managers do not ensure that all staff read children's individual plans. Staff are unclear about their roles and responsibilities and unable to consistently respond to children, in particular, with regard to self-injurious behaviours.

Not all staff, including agency staff, were aware of the content of children's risk assessments or how to support children. No formal induction had been completed with agency workers, so they were not aware of the processes, procedures and responsibilities for working in the home.

Leaders and managers are not ensuring workers have the necessary skills, qualifications and experience to support the children. Inconsistent recruitment checks and recording have left children vulnerable to harm. Agency staff did not have the skills or knowledge to care for children or keep them safe.

Health and safety concerns are not prioritised. A child suffered a significant injury in the garden area. However, immediate action was not taken to rectify the hazards identified. This left other children and staff at risk of significant injury.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The home has operated without a registered manager since September 2021. An application for registration has been submitted by the current manager.

The management oversight in the home is inadequate. The manager has not ensured that all staff working in the home are suitable or appropriately qualified. In addition, staff do not always understand their roles and responsibilities in supporting vulnerable children.

Leaders and managers do not monitor and review care practices. Supervisions and team meetings are not taking place regularly, nor are they reflective. Training provided is predominantly delivered online, with no review of learning. Staff have attended training in safeguarding. However, the shortfalls identified at this visit mean staff do not have the skills and knowledge required to support the children in the home safely. Managers have failed to demonstrate that they are evaluating the level of learning from training.

Due to the safeguarding concerns identified, a restriction notice was issued. Ofsted will monitor the restriction.

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>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>seek to involve each child’s placing authority effectively in the child’s care, in accordance with the child’s relevant plans;</p> <p>seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child’s needs;</p> <p>seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children’s home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(d))</p> <p>In particular, leaders and managers are to enable children to access specialist services to meet the child’s individual needs. This relates to health, well-being and education services.</p> <p>Leaders and managers are to establish links and professional relationships with external bodies and professionals to secure essential support and input that supports the individual needs of the child.</p>	<p>21 November 2022</p>
<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 each child to achieve the child’s education and training targets, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans;</p> <p>support each child’s learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and,</p>	<p>21 November 2022</p>

<p>where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study;</p> <p>understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;</p> <p>help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment;</p> <p>promote opportunities for each child to learn informally;</p> <p>maintain regular contact with each child’s education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child’s education and training and to maximise the child’s achievement;</p> <p>raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child’s education or training provider and the child’s placing authority;</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>help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child’s relevant plans; (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(ix)(x))</p> <p>This relates to the requirement for leaders and managers to establish appropriate links with education providers and the headteacher of the virtual school, to seek support for children to access meaningful and relevant education.</p> <p>Those caring for children are to be able to identify the barriers to learning and take appropriate action and escalate any concerns with the local authority.</p> <p>Leaders and managers must maintain links with education providers and communicate effectively to ensure children are appropriately supported.</p>	
<p>The health and well-being standard is that—</p> <p>the health and well-being needs of children are met;</p>	<p>21 November 2022</p>

<p>children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to—</p> <p>understand the child’s health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child’s health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child’s age and understanding;</p> <p>understand and develop skills to promote the child’s well-being;</p> <p>that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(ii)(iv)(c))</p> <p>This relates to leaders and managers ensuring that children have access to specialist services to support their individual needs.</p> <p>In addition, those who care for children are to be aware of children’s relevant plans and have the skills to understand and promote the child’s well-being.</p>	
<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>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>21 November 2022</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;</p> <p>that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm;</p> <p>that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child’s health; and</p> <p>that the effectiveness of the home’s child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(d)(e))</p> <p>In particular, leaders and managers are to ensure that staff understand how to identify and respond to risks and be clear about their roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Leaders and managers should ensure that those who care for children are aware of relevant plans for individual children.</p> <p>Managers are to ensure that those who care for children understand safeguarding policies and procedures and are appropriately experienced, skilled and trained to safely care for children.</p> <p>Leaders and managers should be satisfied that those staff caring for children have the appropriate qualifications and skills to meet the needs of children and keep them safe from harm.</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</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p>	<p>21 November 2022</p>

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—

ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;

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;

ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child;

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;

demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—

research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and

feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.
(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h))

In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that the home is appropriately staffed to meet the needs of the individual children. Staff should be appropriately trained, skilled and have relevant experience to deliver relevant and safe care.

Leaders and managers should update all relevant plans and ensure that these plans are read, understood and followed by those who care for children.

Leaders and managers are to support staff and the running of the home by providing regular supervisions and team meetings.

<p>Managers are to address any maintenance concerns and ensure the home environment is safely and appropriately maintained.</p>	
<p>The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1.</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it. (Regulation 16 (1) (3)(a))</p>	<p>21 November 2022</p>
<p>After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must—</p> <p>ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. (Regulation 25 (1)(d))</p>	<p>21 November 2022</p>
<p>The registered person must ensure that the employment of any person on a temporary basis at the children's home does not prevent children from receiving such continuity of care as is reasonable to meet their needs. (Regulation 31 (1))</p>	<p>21 November 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>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>the individual is of integrity and good character;</p> <p>the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;</p>	<p>21 November 2022</p>

<p>the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and</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)(a)(b)(c)(d))</p> <p>This is in relation to leaders and managers being satisfied that all staff, either permanent or temporary, have the relevant skills, qualification and experience.</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. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))</p>	<p>21 November 2022</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: 1238043

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Nurture Childcare Services Limited

Registered provider address: Seighford Hall, Clanford Road, Seighford, Stafford
ST18 9NL

Responsible individual: Elizabeth Perry

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Nichola Croft, Social Care Inspector
Jessica Higginson, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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