

1252023

Registered provider: T-Junction Children's Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned. The home is registered to provide care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties.

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced and is registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 October 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and/or the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 15 June 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/06/2021	Full	Good
23/10/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
09/04/2019	Full	Good
16/07/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Children's progress and experiences have been negatively affected by some poor staff practice. Additionally, the leadership and management are not effective and safeguarding arrangements are not keeping children safe. However, children are making some progress and have nurturing relationships with staff. External professionals are positive about the care that children receive and the progress they make.

A child with highly complex needs has moved into the home. The needs of this child fall outside what the home is registered to provide. The child has learning difficulties. The home's statement of purpose does not reflect that they can provide care for children with learning difficulties. Additionally, the staff do not have the skills, qualifications or experience to care for children with learning difficulties. Leaders are considering applying for a variation to their conditions of registration and to update their statement of purpose to accurately reflect the children living in the home, and the skills and training needs of staff.

One child's care plan is not being consistently followed by staff. As a result, crucial and relevant information is not being documented or shared with the relevant health professionals. The communication needs of a child are not fully met as staff have not received training in the specific communication systems. Picture cards are used to support the child to communicate. However, this system does not contain emotion cards, which limits the child's ability to express emotions such as happiness and sadness. This reduces opportunities for the child to alert staff to any concerns. A psychologist provides staff training and guidance in meeting the child's needs but staff attendance at these sessions varies. This reduces opportunities for staff to improve their skills and understanding in this crucial area.

Children's care plans and care planning processes are variable. Some children's plans are detailed and up to date. However, for one child, there is a lack of information. This affects the consistency and quality of care provided.

The children have suitable education provisions. They achieve good attendance and are doing well with their education. One child's previous school placement has been maintained and this has provided consistency in their education.

Children receive the support they need from staff to keep in contact with people who are important to them. Some children have friendships at school and go to parties and friends' houses to play. Children are encouraged to attend clubs in the community and develop hobbies and interests. Recently, a child celebrated their birthday with a tea party for staff and other children. The child was given thoughtful gifts that reflected their interests.

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

Staff have expressed their concern about a pet dog that has been brought into the home. This pet can display unpredictable and aggressive behaviour. Despite these concerns, the dog was taken into a child's bedroom at settling time and was allowed to interact with the child. This had the potential to cause harm to a child.

Most incidents have been managed appropriately and there has been good management oversight. However, on one occasion, the manager and staff did not respond to, or act on, a disclosure made by a child. This prevented oversight from external professionals to assess whether further action may be needed to safeguard the child concerned.

Plans that are designed to manage risk to children are variable in their content. Risk-management plans for some children provide clear and detailed strategies for supporting children. However, others are not individual to the child and do not reflect the child's needs, risks and vulnerabilities. This means that staff do not always have clear guidance on how best to support children and how to adapt their working practices to meet children's changing needs.

Children's behaviours, relationships and interactions have not been adequately considered in matching and impact risk assessments. Additionally, the impact of a lack of communal space has not been assessed, given the potential for this to increase tensions. Children do not spend time together, apart from at mealtimes, and take it in turns to spend time in communal areas due to the limitations on space. One room is currently not in use due to a leak, and this reduces the communal space available in the home.

Staff struggle to consistently manage the risks when children are together. This affects children's opportunities for learning social skills, tolerance and how to live with others. There have been incidents of bullying, and children have threatened each other with violence and used unkind words toward a younger child. Some work has been completed with children to develop their understanding, but this has not led to improvements.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leadership and management of the home are weak. The manager does not feel supported by staff and has been frustrated in her attempts to bring about change and improvement. External and internal monitoring tools have not identified shortfalls in care practice effectively. This prevents improvements from being made.

There are divisions within the staff team. The manager has lost trust in some staff to follow her direction, specifically in relation to implementing children's care plans. The manager has concerns that some staff are avoiding working with certain children. There have been allegations of bullying and racism between staff and management, which has negatively affected team morale. These allegations have not been managed effectively.

Staff supervision meetings and performance management plans do not document when staff practice has been poor and what actions are being taken to improve this. The staff have not had appraisals and there is a reluctance, on the part of staff, to engage in this process, despite repeated attempts by the responsible individual. This prevents opportunities for staff reflection, learning and development.

Staff have completed mandatory training but have not been provided with relevant training to meet a child's specific communication needs. Less than half the team has a relevant childcare qualification.

Staff turnover has been low, and the management team is stable. However, concerns about the practice of some staff and staff absence have led to managers having to undertake shifts. This affects the manager's ability to undertake her own duties. This has led to noticeable deficits in management oversight.

The manager is child-focused. She uses therapeutically informed approaches to care and wants to embed them into care practice. The staff and managers know the children well. They have positive and trusting relationships with the children.

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>an 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 each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;</p> <p>are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same;</p> <p>have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them;</p> <p>that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others.</p> <p>(Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(iv)(x)(xiii)(b))</p> <p>This specifically relates to reducing incidents of bullying, undertaking work with children to improve their social interactions, and supporting staff through documented supervisions to manage their own feelings.</p>	8 December 2022
<p>*The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p>	8 December 2022

<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>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;</p> <p>that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iv)(b))</p> <p>This relates to improving the quality of risk assessments and including pets, reporting disclosures made by children in a timely manner, and undertaking work with children to reduce the risk of them causing harm to each other.</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>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 has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child;</p>	<p>8 December 2022</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>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h))</p> <p>This relates to staff receiving the relevant training and support to work as a team. The manager and leaders should use effective monitoring systems to drive improvement.</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>The registered person must ensure that admissions to the home are in line with the home's conditions of registration.</p>	8 December 2022
<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. (Regulation 16 (1))</p>	8 December 2022
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(c))</p>	8 December 2022

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that all staff consistently follow policies and procedures, understand their roles and responsibilities, and have clear lines of accountability. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.20)

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: 1252023

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: T-Junction Children's Services Ltd

Registered provider address: 27 The Pastures, Narborough, Leicester LE19 3DS

Responsible individual: Timothy Clare

Registered manager: Susan Bird

Inspector

Sarah Orriss, Social Care Inspector

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