

# 1276421

Registered provider: Invested Childcare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private provider. The home can care for up to four children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The manager has been registered since 10 November 2022.

During this visit, the inspectors spoke with three of the four children who live in the home.

### Inspection dates: 11 and 12 January 2023

**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      good

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

**Date of last inspection:** 7 February 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
07/02/2022	Full	Good
14/10/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
16/04/2019	Full	Good
30/10/2018	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children say that they feel happy and safe living in this home. One child said that they had matured since living in this home, because of the support provided to them by the staff. Another child's family member said the change in the child was 'unbelievable' as a result of the care provided to the child in this home. They said that the child had grown in confidence and learned to manage their feelings better. One professional said that they wished 'other homes were like [name of home]'.

Children who live in this home achieve well with their education. One child, who did not attend an education establishment for a significant period of time, went on to achieve GCSEs. Education professionals speak highly of the communication they have with the staff and management in the home, and how well staff and the management team advocate for the children. This helps to improve outcomes for children.

Children are supported to lead healthy lifestyles. Children are supported to understand the risks associated with the misuse of drugs and alcohol, as a specialist worker visits the home regularly. One child has stopped smoking since living in the home. Children are also supported with their sexual health. This support helps the children to learn to take responsibility for improving their own health.

Children's family and friends visit the home, which contributes to the home's family ethos. This includes attending charitable events which the home regularly organises, such as football tournaments. These events have helped to build and improve relationships between family members and professionals, resulting in professionals being better able to support the children's families.

When children visit those who are important to them, staff support the children, their families and their friends with transport and provisions to help them to spend quality time together. This helps the staff to build positive relationships with the children's family and friends, which provides children with an increased support network, while allowing the staff to be assured that the children are safe.

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

Staff and the managers know the children well. They understand how significant life events, and anniversaries of these events, can trigger unsettling feelings in children. Staff use their knowledge of these events, their knowledge of the child, and consultations with the in-house therapist to support the children well through the difficult times. When children make unsafe choices, staff support the children to reflect on this and help them to repair any damaged relationships. This helps the children to feel well cared for, safe and reduces risk.

Physical intervention has not been used. This is a testimony to how well the staff know the children. The therapeutic approach that the staff use helps to further improve the trusting relationships that the children already have with the staff.

Children's risk assessments are regularly updated. They are personalised to the needs of each child and reflect all of their known risks, how these risks may present as behaviours, and what behaviour strategies the staff should use to support the children when they are feeling this way. This helps to improve the children's safety. However, some of the language used in some of these documents is vague and uses terminology that may stigmatise the child.

The provider has an effective internet policy, and they prioritise the children's safety by ensuring that the technology the children use is safe and monitored. The effective use of these systems detected a child accessing unsafe online material. The manager quickly updated the child's risk assessment, changed the online security settings for that child, and directed the staff to complete work with the child to improve the child's safety.

The manager exercises a safer recruitment policy by verifying references, and requesting additional references when he is not fully satisfied that an applicant is a suitable candidate. However, one staff member who lived and worked abroad for a significant period of time was not subject to safeguarding checks relative to that country. This prevents the manager from being assured that the member of staff is safe to work with children.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The manager is committed to supporting the children to stay safe and achieve. He is well supported by a deputy manager. Together, they have high aspirations for the children, and they lead the staff team by example. Staff say that they feel well supported by their managers, who they see as inspirational.

The management team has sought to create a 'homely feel' by abandoning the use of an office and turning this into a space where staff can meet with each other and with the children. Children access this space regularly to chat to the staff and the manager, who has a visible presence in the home and who the children know well. This further contributes to the family ethos of the home.

Managers and the staff are strong advocates for the children. When children do not receive the services that they need, the manager and deputy manager escalate this with the necessary agency. The managers also advocate for family time to be increased as appropriate, which resulted in one child spending Christmas with their family.

The care planning for children is adequate. The manager monitors and reviews the children's plans and records, and he regularly reviews and updates these. While the staff attend all of the children's important meetings such as their health assessments and their care planning meetings, the manager has missed opportunities to formally

escalate the lack of statutory documentation when the child's placing authority has failed to provide this. This oversight hinders the manager from being assured that the staff are working in line with the local authority's agreed written plans.

## What does the children's home need to do to improve?

### Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. In particular, the registered person should ensure that all safeguarding checks are requested for applicants who have resided outside of the jurisdiction of England and Wales for a significant period of time, specifically making safeguarding requests of the country in which the applicant has resided. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure that the staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that when the placing authority or another relevant person does not provide the input and services needed to meet a child's needs during their time in the home, or in preparation for leaving the home, the home must challenge them to meet the child's needs. In particular, the registered person should ensure that they escalate requests for essential information and documents from a third party provider, in a timely manner, when the information informs a child's plan. (Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 12, paragraph 2.8).

### 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:** 1276421

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Invested Childcare Limited

**Registered provider address:** Acklam Hall, Hall Gardens, Middlesbrough TS5 7BJ

**Responsible individual:** Michael Bowe

**Registered manager:** Mark McNally

## Inspectors

Julia Hagan, Social Care Inspector

Jo Birtwhistle, Social Care Inspector

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