

2509473

Registered provider: Back on Track Children's Services SE Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and is registered to provide care for up to four children who experience social and/or emotional difficulties. There were three children living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The home and the manager registered with Ofsted on 12 February 2019.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 February 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 1 December 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/12/2021	Full	Good
08/01/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
21/05/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are happy and make good progress. They are looked after by a skilled and attentive team of staff who understand them. Children who have previously not been able to access education now have consistent attendance.

Children's views are well understood. There is good frequency of structured and unstructured one-to-one work, which allows children to explore how they feel. Children are clear about who they can talk to and are confident that their key workers can help them.

Children experience well-planned care. Detailed care plans with well-reviewed monthly reports identify the work that is being done to support children to continue to make good progress. Plans are written with the children to ensure that they understand the goals and aims for them while living in the home.

Children can share their views in weekly meetings. There is some inconsistency in how these meetings are used. On some occasions, there is a strong focus on how children feel about living in the home and changes that could be made. However, other meetings do not provide this opportunity. This inconsistency creates missed opportunities to seek children's views.

Children's health needs are well met. If the support offered by external professionals is not effective, leaders are quick to identify this. They work with social workers and others to find suitable alternatives.

Children's moves into and out of the home are well planned and supported. The registered manager is clear about the information that is needed before a child's admission is considered. Risks are well understood, which provides the basis for care plans, risk assessments and guidance to staff.

Children who have left the home are supported and prepared sensitively for, what can be, an emotional time. Staff are clear in their approach. They allow children to celebrate success but also to express whatever emotions they are feeling.

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

Generally, risks are well identified. Staff have a good knowledge of historical risks and how these can impact on children. There is good oversight by leaders and good evidence of change following any incidents.

Children are prepared to understand risks online and in the community. However, on one occasion, a child who was starting to have time out of the home on their own had very little preparation work to help them fully explore stranger danger. This had

the potential to make them vulnerable and ill prepared for what should be a positive development.

Leaders have installed robust systems to safeguard children from risks online. These risks are explored well with children to ensure that they have a good understanding.

Children are supported to manage their own behaviour, and staff are clear about their responsibility to help them. Consistent approaches from staff have led to a reduction in incidents. When incidents do occur, they are recorded effectively, and the child is always offered the chance to talk about this.

The registered manager has a clear view regarding consequences. She has worked with the team and the children to empower all to contribute to a system that helps children to reflect on their behaviour without the need for a consequence.

Staff use innovative strategies to support children who self-harm. Regular one-to-one work and the creation of a resource box enables children to reflect on incidents and consider alternative strategies. This has resulted in a marked reduction of incidents of this nature.

Allegations are immediately reported to safeguarding professionals. However, partly due to a lack of response from external agencies, on one occasion, staff continued to question a child about an allegation. In addition, when staff talk to children about such issues, they sometimes use language that is not child friendly. Without an agreed protocol with external professionals, staff risk working in isolation, which could impact on further investigations.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by a passionate, experienced registered manager who is well supported by an equally experienced deputy manager. Managers have clear expectations for children and staff and are clear about how they want them to develop.

All staff are quick to talk about the positive support that they receive and how approachable leaders are. Staff are supported through regular supervision, appraisals and team meetings. However, there are some inconsistencies in how supervision sessions are recorded.

Rigorous monitoring ensures that leaders are aware of the home's successes and challenges and are quick to react. Revised audit systems have eradicated any medication concerns, and robust monitoring of care plans allows children's progress to be tracked. As staff's skills have increased and children's needs have changed, leaders have identified that some parts of the home's model of care no longer meet the needs of the children. Leaders are being thoughtful and creative about this and have ensured that they have researched several options before they make any changes.

Leaders are quick to challenge external agencies when they do not believe appropriate action is taken.

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>help each child to understand how to keep safe. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(ii))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that children are supported to understand the risks in local community.</p>	30 April 2023
<p>The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which—</p> <p>is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect; and</p> <p>sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 34 (1)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, staff must ensure that they are reacting to an initial allegation from a child without the need to question, unless this is agreed with a social worker and/or other safeguarding professionals.</p>	30 April 2023
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>a child protection enquiry involving a child—</p> <p>is instigated; or</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(d)(i)(e))</p>	30 April 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the child's cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted on. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that supervision enables staff to reflect and act on how their own feelings and behaviour may be affected by the behaviour of the children they care for. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.15)

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: 2509473

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Back on Track Children's Services SE Limited

Registered provider address: 185 Dover Road, Walmer, Deal, Kent CT14 7NB

Responsible individual: Christopher Campbell

Registered manager: Katie Smissen

Inspector

Mark Newington, Social Care Inspector

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