

1226757

Registered provider: Potton Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides long-term care for up to three children with a diagnosed learning disability.

The registered manager left in June 2022. There is a new manager in post who has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 February 2023

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: 8 December 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/12/2021	Full	Good
10/09/2019	Full	Good
15/01/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
04/06/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

The home is judged requires improvement to be good because of shortfalls identified in the help and protection judgement. This is despite the good progress that children make.

There are three children living at the home. Two children have moved on from the home in the last year.

There are some areas of the home that need minor repair, including the downstairs cloakroom, the lighting in the lounge and the paintwork in a child's bedroom. These detract from what is otherwise a well-kept home.

Children have good relationships with staff. The atmosphere is calm, and children are comfortable with staff. Staff are playful and tactile. One child said 'it's the best' when asked if she liked living at the home.

The children's guide and the complaints process are in two formats, aimed at different developmental ages. The information is child friendly and accessible. This enables children to receive important information about their rights and responsibilities.

There are lots of activities on offer for children, which they help to plan each week. Children thoroughly enjoyed a trip to Legoland at Christmas. This sparked an interest in using building blocks for one child. Opportunities like this help children to develop their own interests and create happy memories.

All children benefit from education. One child, who had not attended school for some time before moving to the home, is attending school every day now. The staff tenaciously chased a school place for a child who moved into the home recently. The children have all achieved a range of vocational certificates. This focus on the importance of education will help children learn and benefit from structured daily routines.

The children benefit from weekly therapy. Two children are accessing therapy sessions and one child is attending music therapy. Having these options available helps children to improve their emotional well-being.

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

Leaders and managers have failed to take appropriate action following two different allegations made by two children. On one occasion, the allegation was shared four months after the incident following an internal management review. The second

allegation failed to contain all the relevant information, with significant elements missing. These shortfalls fail to ensure that children are safeguarded effectively and protected from the risk of harm.

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that safer recruitment practices are followed consistently. Agency staff are used on a regular basis. Despite this, one agency staff recruitment file did not contain a full job history or gaps in employment. This lack of scrutiny has left children at the risk of being cared for by unsuitable adults.

Children have individualised plans which consider their needs. Twenty-four-hour management plans and initial-placement plans are informative. This helps staff to keep children safe.

All the children have a designated key worker. Key-work sessions are regularly provided, and staff discuss a range of important topics with children. These sessions help children to develop their thinking and explore their identity.

Staff encourage positive behaviour using reward incentives. Restraint is used when needed to keep children safe. There are currently less restraints as children are feeling more settled at the home. All staff have had restraint training. Restraint records show good reflective practice, and children are always encouraged to talk about any incident afterwards. This gives children the opportunity to voice their feelings.

There is a dedicated therapeutic worker who holds a range of meetings that help build reflective practice. These meetings support good practice and staff well-being. These elements create a resilient staff team that can provide consistent care for children.

The staff help children build independence skills in line with their abilities. One child is very skilled at making flatpack furniture. Another child has been supported with personal care skills. These skills will help children as they move towards adulthood.

The home has strong relationships with families and professionals. Feedback from parents and a range of professionals is positive. One social worker said, 'The staff have been very good at understanding the child's wishes and feelings and have worked hard to get an education placement. They are getting to know her well and have found ways of working with her that work for her.' This child-centred practice enables children to reach their potential.

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

There is a new manager who is settling in well. She has a level 5 diploma in leadership and management, and is applying to register with Ofsted.

Leaders and managers have failed to review areas of the home that children cannot access. These areas include wardrobes and drawers that are locked in a child's bedroom. This fails to ensure that these ongoing restrictions are necessary and proportionate.

The team is relatively new and the majority of staff have recently started their level 3 diploma. However, one staff member was significantly out of time scales for this. It is important for all staff to meet the requirements on completing their diploma so that children are cared for by suitably qualified staff.

The manager has high aspirations for the home and the children. Leaders and managers are committed to creating an environment where children can thrive. They aim to support the children to independence.

There has been a recruitment drive and new staff have been employed. Adding regular permanent staff to the team supports better continuity of care for children.

Leaders and managers have sourced specialist training for the staff relating to the current group of children. This increases the staff's skill base and helps them to work more effectively with children who have complex needs.

There are basic monitoring systems in place. The systems provide helpful data about children's progress and their needs. This means plans can be targeted in areas that are helpful to each child.

Staff feel well supported by the manager and there are good structures in place for staff induction and training. Staff received regular supervisions that discuss a range of relevant matters. Team meetings are well attended and documented.

The manager has built better relationships with the neighbours and there is an open chain of communication now. Some of the children have met the neighbours, helping children to feel part of their community.

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>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vii))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that when allegations of abuse against staff occur, referrals are made in full and without delay to the local authority designated officer.</p>	1 March 2023
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>the privacy of children is appropriately protected;</p> <p>children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and</p> <p>any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises—</p> <p>is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and</p> <p>allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (a)(b)(c)(iii)(iv))</p> <p>In particular, review children's restricted access to bedroom furniture and personal belongings.</p>	1 March 2023

<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>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)(d))</p>	<p>1 March 2023</p>
<p>For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—</p> <p>the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or</p> <p>a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.</p> <p>The relevant date is—</p> <p>in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or</p> <p>in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b))</p>	<p>1 April 2023</p>

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meet the needs of the children. In particular, they should repair the lighting in the lounge, the downstairs toilet and refresh the paintwork in a

child's bedroom. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: 1226757

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Potton Homes Limited

Registered provider address: 3 Rayns Way, Syston, Leicester LE7 1PF

Responsible individual: David Whitty

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Mary Costello, Social Care Inspector

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