

2509670

Registered provider: Crystal Care Solutions Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home is registered to provide care for up to four children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in April 2021.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 March 2023 and 27 and 28 April 2023

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 are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: 9 June 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/06/2021	Full	Good
11/12/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Children have made progress in some areas of their lives, including in their education outcomes. However, serious shortfalls in safeguarding practice, care planning and the leadership and management of the home have not ensured that children's safety and welfare are consistently prioritised.

The manager did not undertake a thorough assessment of one child's needs prior to them moving into the home. Significant known risks were not identified by the manager as part of the child's transition process. This resulted in ineffective care planning and poor risk management.

Staff are not provided with current, up-to-date plans for all children's care. In considering one child's plan, the manager has not taken into account the child's disability or identified how this may impact their daily life. Key information in relation to the child's communication needs was not shared with staff. This is a missed opportunity to ensure that all staff understand each child's needs.

Not all children are supported to promote their health needs. One child's medical condition is not understood by the manager and staff. Consequently, the manager cannot be assured that the staff will support the child to receive the most suitable healthcare, in line with their medical condition. However, staff were proactive in ensuring that another child could access specialist help and support in relation to a recent diagnosis. This is supporting the child's emotional well-being.

The manager and staff have received training in the use of a therapeutic model. They are nurturing in their approach and have high aspirations for the children they care for. However, this nurturing approach is not always reflected in the children's records. Staff have used stigmatising and unhelpful language in records. This does not support children to understand their care experiences.

Despite the identified shortfalls, staff do understand and promote children's cultural needs. Children are supported to take part in faith-based activities in the home and in the community. This supports children's identity and faith.

Children enjoy a range of leisure and fun activities. These provide opportunities for children to make new friendships with their peers. Children are actively encouraged to be part of their local community. For example, they have made packed lunches for people who are homeless, baked cakes for older people, and made pictures for a hospital that one of the children had received care from. This promotes children's confidence and self-esteem.

Children proudly showed inspectors around their home and their bedrooms. Children's bedrooms are personalised to reflect their individual tastes and interests

and there are lots of photos on the walls of the children having fun. Most areas of the home are well maintained. However, in some areas, repairs and damaged furniture detract from the homely environment.

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

There are serious and widespread failings in the assessment and management of risk. The manager and staff do not demonstrate that they fully understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe.

Risk-management plans are ineffective because they do not consistently contain relevant and current information about children's risks. Some known risks and behaviours for children are not clearly assessed. Staff spoken to were not clear about children's risks or the actions that they should take to manage and reduce risks. This lack of knowledge does not safeguard children.

Not all children are appropriately safeguarded. In one incident, a young child left the home during the early hours of the morning, without the knowledge of staff. Leaders and the manager took some practical steps after the incident to safeguard the child. However, the manager did not embed a robust protocol for staff to follow should the child go missing again. The plan provided to staff does not reflect the child's young age and vulnerability. Furthermore, staff were unclear about the content of the current plan in place to safeguard the child.

Plans for some children in times of crisis are unclear. The plan for one child with additional learning needs does not consider the child's disability or how physical intervention can be used safely. Despite the social worker sharing clear guidance on successful behaviour-management strategies, this was not incorporated into the child's plans. These inconsistencies and lack of clarity about safely caring for a child do not ensure that appropriate care-planning decisions are made.

The manager and staff do not understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe in relation to the use of e-cigarettes. Staff are not provided with a clear plan to reduce this risk or clear guidance on what they should do if they find e-cigarettes in children's bedrooms. This does not promote children's healthy lifestyles.

The manager and staff do not consistently take appropriate action to minimise the impact of bullying on children. One child disclosed to a member of school staff that they had been bullied by another child in the home. This was reported to the manager and staff in the home. However, they minimised this concern because they did not feel that the behaviour displayed was an incident of bullying. Failing to listen to the child about their experiences and take effective action does not demonstrate an understanding or insight into the effect of bullying on children's emotional well-being.

Although staff receive training around whistle-blowing as part of their induction process, they have failed to implement this learning in practice. The manager does not address shortfalls in safeguarding practice with staff effectively and does not

reflect on incidents that have occurred to identify any learning for the staff team. Poor safeguarding practice, together with ineffective management oversight, places children at risk of harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The manager is experienced and qualified. Professionals and staff spoke highly of the manager's dedication and passion.

The manager does not use monitoring systems effectively to ensure that there are improvements in the quality of care provided to children. Oversight of children's records has not identified weaknesses in care planning for children.

Management oversight of significant events is ineffective. Although the manager has reviewed records, they have failed to identify and address shortfalls in recording or evaluate the effectiveness of staff practice. For example, when a child disclosed that they had misused substances, the staff member lacked professional curiosity and minimised the child's disclosure. This was a missed opportunity to address any risks to the child of exploitation.

Staff are not being supported, within supervision or through debriefs, to reflect on training or significant events in the home. For example, despite staff receiving training on the risks of exploitation, they lack the knowledge and understanding of children's individual risks. This lack of knowledge about the children living in the home undermines the effectiveness of the training received and potentially places the children at risk of harm.

Staff have received training in some key areas. Staff value the training that they receive and the opportunities for development. However, staff have not been provided with training to support their understanding of, or ability to meet, the needs of children with disabilities. This is a missed opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills of the staff team.

The manager has built effective working relationships with relevant professionals. One professional highlighted the strengths in communication from both the manager and the staff team.

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>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>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;</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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)9i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person must ensure that children’s risk assessments include the most current information about the risks to children and the strategies for staff to follow to reduce risks.</p> <p>Further to this, the registered person must ensure that staff take effective action to safeguard children, in line with the children’s relevant plans.</p>	<p>11 June 2023</p>

<p>The registered person must ensure that staff have read the home's whistle-blowing policy and understand when and how they should implement this to safeguard children.</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>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</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)(c)(f)(h))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person must ensure that they are developing staff skills and knowledge through effective training, debriefs following significant events and practice-based supervision.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that staff have the skills and knowledge to recognise signs and risk factors for child exploitation.</p> <p>Further to this, the registered person must ensure that staff have the skills and knowledge to care for children with disabilities.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that there is effective oversight of significant incidents in the home and an evaluation of staff practice as a means of identifying any lessons learned and improving practice in the process.</p>	<p>11 June 2023</p>
<p>*14 The care planning standard is that children—</p>	<p>11 June 2023</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;</p> <p>that each child’s relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person must ensure that they carefully consider children’s needs, risks and behaviours prior to them moving into the home.</p> <p>Further to this, the registered person must ensure that the home’s care plans for children incorporate the outcomes from children’s relevant plans. In particular, the registered person must ensure that care plans reflect children’s individual needs, such as any disability, and demonstrate how staff must meet these needs.</p>	
<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>meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans;</p> <p>help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship;</p>	<p>11 June 2023</p>

understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and

have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them.

(Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(vii)(xii)(xiii))

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children. Specifically, the registered person should ensure that repairs are completed in a timely manner so as not to detract from the home environment. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff 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. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 2509670

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Crystal Care Solutions Limited

Registered provider address: Bank House, Market Square, Congleton, Cheshire
CW12 1ET

Responsible individual: James O'Leary

Registered manager: Rebecca Hilditch

Inspectors

Emma Thornton, Social Care Inspector
Caroline Bertram, Regulatory Inspection Manager

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