

SC462951

Registered provider: ERA Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by an independent provider. It provides care for up to three children aged between 11 and 18 with social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2023.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 May 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: 20 June 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/06/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
15/02/2022	Full	Good
17/12/2019	Full	Good
07/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of this inspection, no children were living at the home. One child had lived at the home on their own for one year. All professionals agreed that the manager and staff met the child's needs. However, the child required additional help that the staff could not offer. One professional said, 'The staff got the child to where they needed to be for the next step in their life.'

The child experienced positive moves into and out of the home. The manager understands the importance of working with other professionals to gather and share information. The child was regularly told what was happening. Staff involved the child in planning. For instance, staff and the child researched the new area that child was going to live in. Staff met with the child to listen to their thoughts. This helped the child to accept and look forward to changes in their life.

The child made good progress at the home. They learned to cook, clean their bedroom and be responsible for their personal hygiene. Additionally, the child started to engage with professionals for the first time. Further progress was made as behavioural incidents and missing-from-home incidents reduced for the child. One professional said that it was not easy to meet the child's needs. They said, 'The staff brought the best out of [name of child].'

Staff understood the importance of building a trusting relationship with the child. Staff were persistent and resilient in their approach. This helped the child to understand that staff care. Staff used respect, boundaries and honesty with the child. The child responded well to this approach and formed strong relationships with staff.

Staff helped the child to enjoy their hobbies and interests. The child played football for three different teams. Staff and members of the child's family would watch the child play football on a weekly basis. This helped the child to feel proud of their achievements. The child showed an interest in table tennis. The manager funded a coach for the child to enhance their skills in this sport. Staff also introduced new activities to the child, including basketball, go-karting and chess. The child learned new skills while building self-esteem and having fun.

Staff recognised the importance of the child staying in touch with their family and friends. Staff organised activities when family members visited. This helped the child to build positive memories and feel a sense of belonging.

At times, the child found it difficult to attend school. Staff were proactive in working with the school to help the child during these times. A bespoke timetable was created, which helped the child to improve their attendance. Eventually, the child refused to attend school despite the tailored programme and a consistent approach from staff. Staff understood that it was still important for the child to learn. They

created an education plan that was based on the child's interests. The child engaged with this approach and made progress in creative writing and mathematics.

Staff prioritised the child's physical and mental health needs. Staff made referrals to specialist services and encouraged the child to attend. The organisation's in-house therapist spent quality time with the child. This helped the child talk about their memories and feelings. As a result, the child started to understand their emotions and manage them more effectively.

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

When the child left the home without permission, staff were consistent in their approach. Staff informed other professionals without delay and looked for the child in places that the child would go. When staff found the child, they used negotiation skills that prevented conflict and helped the child to respond positively to staff requests. All professionals agreed that this approach had a positive effect on the child. As a result, missing-from-home incidents significantly reduced.

Staff used consequences to help the child to understand when they had made an unhealthy choice. The manager's evaluations identified that the child responded better to rewards and practice was changed. This helped the child to become more aware of their actions and there was a reduction in the use of consequences.

The previous manager understood their role and responsibility to report safeguarding concerns. The child would regularly make allegations about staff members. The previous manager met with the child to make certain they understood the child's concerns and provided reassurance. This meant that the child felt listened to and valued. However, the previous manager did not follow the organisation's safeguarding policy, which states that the outcome of the allegation must be logged. This oversight means that information had not been evaluated to inform staff practice.

Staff use physical intervention as a last resort and only when de-escalation strategies have failed. The manager met with staff and the child after incidents of physical intervention. This helped staff to reflect on and consider alternative approaches. These meetings also helped the child talk about what happened. The manager evaluated these discussions well. However, the manager did not date when she evaluated the information. This means that it is unclear if the manager followed the agreed timescales for this review and reflection.

The child's risk assessments and behaviour management plans were regularly updated and easy to follow. This ensured that staff worked consistently with the child and had the information they needed to manage and reduce risks to the child's safety. Staff ensured that these documents were regularly reviewed to highlight any new risks or concerns. However, the documents are not dated, which means that it is unclear which are the most recent.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is experienced and qualified to manage the home. An experienced deputy supports the manager. The responsible individual spends time at the home and has good relationships with staff and the child.

The staff team is stable and diverse, which provided consistency for the child and enhanced their experiences.

The registered manager follows safer recruitment processes. All additional checks on staff are carried out. Staff move through a detailed induction, which involves training and shadow shifts until they are competent. Staff are assessed by the manager throughout their probation period. Staff practice is monitored effectively by managers.

Staff receive regular supervision and appraisals. Staff say that they are supported by the managers. The managers encourage staff to reflect on their practice and outcomes for the child. Managers focus on the well-being of staff.

Staff attend well-organised team meetings. The home's therapist holds group supervision sessions which help staff to talk about specific concerns, develop their skills and learn new approaches. Staff used their knowledge to help the child to make progress with their personal hygiene.

Staff were trained to meet the child's needs. Additional training was provided to enhance staff's skills and knowledge in disability. This helped staff to maintain good levels of care and understand why the child found some areas of their life more difficult. Staff have either attained or are working towards a relevant level 3 qualification.

The registered manager's monitoring systems help her to have good oversight of the care provided. The home uses a database that produces evidence of the progress that children make. The manager shares this information with other professionals. This helped to identify a suitable placement based on the child's abilities. However, the manager's review of the quality of care does not include the child's views. This limits information to drive improvements.

The registered manager has met the one requirement set at the last inspection.

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 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.</p> <p>The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular—</p> <p>provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response. (Regulation 34 (1)(a) (2)(d))</p> <p>This relates to following the organisation's safeguarding policy by recording the outcome of all safeguarding concerns.</p>	23 June 2023
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(ii))</p> <p>This relates to the registered manager including the date of when they have confirmed that the record is accurate.</p>	23 June 2023
<p>In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p> <p>the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it. (Regulation 45 (2)(b))</p>	23 June 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that case records are kept up to date and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

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: SC462951

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: ERA Care Limited

Registered provider address: Unit 3a, The Maltings, Station Road,
Sawbridgeworth CM21 9JX

Responsible individual: Miliano Mile

Registered manager: Louise Clarke

Inspector

Mandy Start, Social Care Inspector

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