

1236532

Registered provider: Calcot Services for Children Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care for up to six children with learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, complex needs and social and emotional difficulties.

The home has been without a registered manager since August 2022. There is a manager in post who has applied to be registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 June 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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 29 June 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/06/2022	Full	Good
31/01/2022	Full	Outstanding
10/12/2019	Full	Good
27/02/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are thriving through the warm and caring relationships they have with staff. Social workers comment positively about the progress the children make. Children's actions show they are comfortable and confident with staff and are relaxed in their home.

Children's views are listened to through the increased use of symbols and other communication tools in the home. Staff training in this area has meant that children are more understood. Children were visibly happier that staff understand what they are communicating. One child was particularly excited to sign that he was watching a programme, and he loved the signed response asking if he liked it. The children have helped to pick out new colours for the home and soft furnishings for their rooms. Those who struggle with the sensory challenges of being in shops choose their clothes online with staff support.

All children have established education placements, mostly in the local special school. Partnership working with education staff means that staff know how the children are progressing in school and their current goals and targets. These are replicated in the home when relevant. When children struggle to attend school, they are supported through daily programmes of education and enriching activities. Staff advocate for the children to source formal education and support for the children to overcome the barriers that prevent them from leaving the home.

Children have benefited from an increase in sensory exploration through play and organised activities. The garden is full of toys and equipment that the children were enjoying, including two new different-sized trampolines, a paddling pool with inflatables and balance toys. Staff have increased their confidence in helping children explore different tastes and textures. Children engage excitedly in a messy food sensory activity, with staff enjoying the exploration as much as the children. Those who struggle to join the group are supported to be involved in the same activities through one-to-one support in a different area of the home.

Children's health and well-being needs are well met. There is clear joint working with partner health and well-being practitioners. There has been a concerted effort to link in with speech and language therapists and occupational therapists to ensure that staff work consistently across settings with children. Managers have been persistent in seeking child and adolescent mental health support services for children as needed, and they continue to advocate for support in this area.

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

Children's actions and demeanour show they feel safe in their home and with the staff who support them. Staff support the children when they need help, are upset

or want company. The physical environment is safe and free from avoidable risks, which means the children can wander freely without concern.

Staff are well versed in how to respond should they be concerned for a child's welfare or safety. They confidently speak about how to report their concerns outside of the organisation and who the local safeguarding partners are. Staff, including agency staff, know the whistle-blowing procedure and are happy to challenge colleagues if needed. The local authority designated officer commented positively about the home's contact with them.

Staff have a good understanding of the children's needs and how to support them in times of upset or crisis. Staff know that children communicate through their behaviours and seek to understand what they want or need. Good planning of shifts means that children who are currently struggling have the individualised support they need. Children are actively engaged in post-incident debriefs that are tailored to their understanding and communication style.

Plans are clear and reflective of the children's needs, including sound evaluations of incidents. The quality of incident records has improved, allowing managers to have better oversight and identify any trends and patterns to improve practice. This has led to a lower use of physical interventions.

Children are protected from avoidable risk through joining in practice fire evacuations. Children's evacuation plans are updated, and staff know how to safely support the children in the event of an emergency. Safer recruitment practice means that children are protected from being cared for by unsuitable people.

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

The home has been without a registered manager since August 2022. The home manager has completed their application to be registered with Ofsted and is due to be interviewed in the coming weeks.

Of the nine requirements made at the last monitoring visit in January 2023, six were deemed to be met at this inspection. Three were remade. These are in relation to the accuracy of rotas, the consistency of information in children's plans and the availability of the most up-to-date information for agency staff who work in the home. However, these shortfalls were not deemed to have had a direct impact on the children in the home.

Since the last full inspection, there has been a new home manager and two deputy managers appointed. There has been a significant number of staff who have moved on from the home, with an almost completely new staff team being employed. The staff spoken to were excited about their roles and committed to the children. They feel well supported by the management team, which is available for support at any time.

Managers in the home have been working with the new staff team to develop an ethos and culture in the home that is increasingly child-centred. The home is a positive environment where the children's views are held in mind. Advocates have been sourced for most of the children, and managers are keen for children to have other avenues to express themselves and share their views. There is greater joint working with partner agencies to improve the children's care and experiences.

Staff, including those from agencies, have regular and evaluative supervision. Training is reflective of the children's needs, and there has been a drive to train staff formally in the children's communication techniques. Liaison with the speech and language therapist at the local school has led to an agreement to train staff to ensure consistency in communication approaches across the settings.

The management team has developed new monitoring systems to ensure that the home is functioning as set out in the statement of purpose. The managers make sound use of reports by the independent person to develop the service. Despite the shortfalls noted, the home is better organised than it was at the monitoring visit in January. This is leading to children having better consistency and improved outcomes.

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, The 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 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>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that there is consistent information in all plans and records.</p>	31 August 2023
<p>The registered person must ensure that the employment of any person on a temporary basis at the children's home does not prevent children from receiving such continuity of care as is reasonable to meet their needs. (Regulations 31 (1))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that any temporary member of staff from within the organisation and/or an agency is provided with up-to-date information about each child's needs.</p>	31 August 2023
<p>Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home.</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4;</p> <p>ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b))</p>	31 August 2023

In particular, the registered person must ensure that rotas are up to date to accurately reflect any changes made and the times that staff are on shift.

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: 1236532

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Calcot Services for Children Limited

Registered provider address: Advantage, 87 Castle Street, Reading, Berkshire
RG1 7SN

Responsible individual: Robin Ward

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Jennie Christopher, Social Care Inspector

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