

SC379123

Registered provider: Cove Care Residential Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home offers care for up to five children with mental health difficulties, psychological and/or emotional difficulties and associated complex care needs.

The registered manager post has been vacant since 23 March 2023. A new manager has been appointed.

Inspection dates: 31 May and 1 June 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 and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 6 September 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection:

On 28 March 2023, Ofsted conducted an assurance inspection. Serious and widespread concerns in relation to the care of children were identified. Two compliance notices were issued, for the quality and purpose of care standard (regulation 6) and the leadership and management standard (regulation 13).

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/09/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
22/03/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
21/07/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
04/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

At the time of this inspection, two children were living in the home. Since the previous inspection, two children have moved on. For one child, this was a positive and planned move. For the other child, managers and staff were unable to keep them safe and manage risk. This child moved on more quickly than planned.

The home is in a poor condition and unclean. There were dirty carpets, walls in a poor state, a child's toothpaste tube had mould on it, a mattress was stained and bedding was unclean, and a damaged sofa had not been repaired. Similar shortfalls were identified at the previous inspection and managers and staff have not taken action to rectify them. In addition, there was a lack of food options available. Children raised these concerns with the inspectors.

Managers and staff fail to provide children with a nurturing and homely environment. There is institutional practice, such as labelling crockery for staff use only, with children having different crockery. Some food and drinks are locked in a cupboard for no good reason. During the inspection, a deep clean was started and a large food shop carried out. Children said, 'Staff are cleaning the house for inspectors not for children.' This poor care demonstrates a lack of respect for children.

Staff are not always clear on the support they need to give children to help them with their education. Not enough action was taken to support one child to overcome barriers to education and whose attendance at school was poor. Staff are not always clear on children's educational targets and goals and managers are unable to track any measurable progress. Both children living in the home are currently attending school.

Children are not always provided with the care and support needed to help them to progress. One child's social worker said staff were not aware of the child's care plan and had not supported the child to work on increasing their independence skills in readiness for moving on. However, another child has made some progress with self care skills and independence.

Children enjoy some activities such as going bowling and having their nails done. However, poor planning and lack of routines result in children sometimes missing out on positive childhood experiences and creating memories. For example, despite the children being on school holidays, staff had no activities planned for them to enjoy.

Children told inspectors that staff support them to spend quality time with their close family and friends, which is important to the children. This helps them to develop and maintain their social networks.

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

Leaders and managers have failed to develop a positive safeguarding culture where staff are skilled in managing potential risk. Despite serious concerns for one child's safety, managers were unable to demonstrate any meaningful work done with the children to help them to keep safe. Although some risk assessments are reviewed and updated to take account of new information, this is not done consistently. It is not clear that staff are aware of new information or strategies developed to help keep children safe.

The impact on children of known risks in the local area has not been considered and these risks have not been added to the safe area assessment. This is despite leaders and managers receiving new information from the police. This hinders staff's ability to ensure they fully understand the risks associated with the location of the home and how to protect children from them.

Leaders and managers are still not fully ensuring that all staff are safely recruited. Some staff files still had gaps in recruitment histories. This shortfall was identified at a previous inspection.

Restraints are not always recorded as required. The independent person identified this at their monthly visit in April 2023. At the time of this inspection, the shortfall remained. The responsible individual acknowledged that restraint records still need improving. This limits managers' ability to review practice and ensure any restraint used is proportionate and safe.

When children go missing from home, staff follow children's missing protocols and behaviour management plans. They work in partnership with agencies such as police and social workers to locate the children and bring them back home safely.

Some children have made progress. For, example, one child's emotional well-being has improved and their incidents of going missing from care have reduced. The child now has some independent time and access to a mobile phone.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The registered manager resigned from her post in March 2023. A new manager has been appointed but has not yet started work at the home. The responsible individual is present in the home two days a week.

Leaders and managers are ineffective. They fail to identify shortfalls or take action to make immediate improvements to the quality of care. Their reviewing and monitoring of the home continues to be poor and is not leading to sustained improvements. Compliance notices in relation to regulation 6 (the quality of care standard) and regulation 13 (the leadership and management standard) have not been met. Some previous requirements are also not met and are restated. A restriction of accommodation notice has been issued, as there are concerns that if

further children move into the home this would compromise the welfare of children and place them at risk of harm.

Leaders and managers are failing to use feedback and scrutiny from external professionals to help them improve children's experiences. For example, concerns raised at a local authority quality assurance visit have not been addressed. Recommendations from the independent visitor's report have also not been addressed. This demonstrates a lack of ability to make the necessary changes to improve.

Staff and managers do not consistently listen to children's wishes and feelings. For example, children said they do not feel this is a family home. They asked for a more varied diet and discussed activities but these requests were not acted on. However, one child was given a new desk and helped to choose some new decorative items for the home. This inconsistency shows children are not always listened to or their contributions valued.

Staff are still not receiving supervision consistently and some staff have yet to receive an annual appraisal. This is a missed opportunity to discuss staff's strengths and areas for improvement to improve the quality of care given to children.

Staff and managers are still not maintaining up-to-date children's records. Social workers raised concerns that they are not receiving children's weekly progress reports, to assist them in tracking whether children are achieving their set outcomes outlined in their care plans. Staff are not keeping up-to-date records that consistently detail the children's journeys and experiences.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>protect and promote each child's welfare;</p> <p>provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background;</p> <p>provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably;</p> <p>make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice;</p> <p>ensure that the premises used for the purpose of the home are designed and furnished so as to—</p> <p>meet the needs of the child; and</p> <p>enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iv)(vii)(ix)(c)(i)(ii))</p>	16 July 2023

<p>This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is repeated.</p>	
<p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</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 achieve the child’s education and training targets, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans;</p> <p>support each child’s learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study;</p> <p>understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii))</p> <p>This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is repeated.</p>	<p>16 July 2023</p>
<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>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v))</p>	<p>16 July 2023</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>16 July 2023</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>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)(h))</p> <p>This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is repeated.</p>	
<p>A responsible individual must—</p> <p>have the capacity, experience and skills to supervise the management of the home, or the homes, in respect of which the responsible individual is nominated. (Regulation 26 (7)(b))</p> <p>This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is repeated.</p>	16 July 2023
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and</p> <p>have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)(c))</p> <p>This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is repeated.</p>	16 July 2023
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;</p>	16 July 2023

<p>the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;</p> <p>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;</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 spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p> <p>This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is repeated.</p>	
<p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which—</p> <p>include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child;</p> <p>are kept up to date; and</p> <p>are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))</p> <p>This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is repeated.</p>	<p>16 July 2023</p>

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home is suitably located so that children are safeguarded effectively and can access services to meet needs identified in their relevant plans (see regulations 12(2)(c)). Under regulation 46, the registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

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: SC379123

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cove Care Residential Limited

Registered provider address: 16 Waterloo Road, Wolverhampton, West Midlands
WV1 4BL

Responsible individual: Rachel Oliver

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Rumbi Mangoma, Social Care Inspector
Janet Fraser, Social Care Inspector

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