

1231458

Registered provider: Sherlock Healthcare Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and provides care for up to four children with complex needs or who have had adverse early childhood experiences.

The registered manager post has been vacant since July 2023. A new manager has been in post since August 2023; they are yet to submit an application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 August 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: 7 December 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/12/2022	Full	Good
10/01/2022	Full	Good
05/12/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/07/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

At the time of the inspection, four children were living in the home. Shortfalls in how well children are kept safe and the failings of managers have negatively impacted on the overall experiences and progress for children.

One child has left the home since the last inspection, and experienced a planned and positive move from the home. Two children do not currently have pathway plans completed by their local authorities. The manager has not escalated this. The assessment would appropriately identify children's needs and implement a plan of action to ensure that they successfully prepare for and move to independence. This delay could impact on a successful move for children whose plans are to move on from the home shortly.

The staff have missed opportunities to encourage and support children to meet their health needs. For example, one child refused to attend four dental appointments. Staff did not have discussions to educate the child, and no further actions were taken to increase the child's understanding about the importance of attending the appointments.

Children would benefit from more structured routines to support their development and promote better outcomes. Children have been awake throughout the night playing computer games and, consequently, spending most of the day in bed. This does not promote children's positive well-being and development. The efforts of staff have not been effective in discouraging these behaviours.

One child has made considerable progress with their school attendance and learning. The child told the inspector that education has been the biggest change for them since moving to the home, because previously they had not been in school for several years. When children are moving between education provisions or excluded from school, staff support children's learning by using resources from school or education websites. The manager and staff have challenged education providers and escalated concerns when children experience difficulties in school.

Children said that they have positive relationships with the staff and the registered manager, and the inspector observed this. Staff ensure that children spend time with the people who are important to them. This includes transporting children across the country to spend time with people they want to see.

The home is welcoming and reflects a nurturing family environment. There are photos of the children doing group activities, books and games displayed throughout the home. The children's bathroom needs some repair and the garden needs maintaining. These are included in the home's development plan and some work in the garden is underway.

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

Drugs misuse by some children in the home is a significant concern. There are concerns that some children are being criminally exploited and are involved in selling drugs and carrying weapons. Staff work with the police to confiscate the drugs and other associated items and report their concerns. Managers and staff work with other agencies to try to reduce exploitation risks. The manager and staff have requested local authority meetings, increased room searches and chased external support for children involved with using and selling cannabis. Staff have attempted to educate children and increase their awareness of drugs misuse and exploitation. These actions have not been effective in discouraging children's involvement with using and selling cannabis. There has been an increase in the frequency and severity of incidents since the last inspection.

Children's criminal exploitation risk assessments vary in quality. Some risk assessments are clear and are updated regularly, while others have not been updated since the last inspection and have not been updated with recent significant incidents. Therefore, they do not appropriately reflect the children's current risks and lack evaluation and curiosity about the actions required to ensure that children are safe. Children suspected to be victims of child criminal exploitation do not have risk assessments around their free time in the community, and they do not have phone checks carried out. The absence of these risk assessments significantly limits the ability of the manager and staff to identify, understand and manage risks to the children concerned and the other children living in the home.

The manager does not share important information with staff to enable them to appropriately safeguard children. For example, the manager attended a meeting where information was shared around children's involvement with gangs and other groups, but the manager did not share this information with staff. These are missed opportunities for the manager and staff to understand children's patterns, associations and whereabouts to safeguard them effectively. This shortfall does not keep children safe and exposes children to risk of significant harm.

The quality of children's missing-from-home risk-management plans and protocols varies. Some plans clearly set out what actions staff should take if a child is missing from home, while other plans are unclear and do not reflect recent incidents and behaviours presented by the children. Staff do not always follow the actions set out in the plans.

The home's fire risk assessment had a recommendation regarding staff training. This has still not been actioned, six months after the recommendation was made. Furthermore, children have consistently refused to engage in fire drills. The manager has not implemented an action plan to promote children's engagement. This raises concerns for children's safety if a fire should occur.

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

The current manager had only been in post for one month prior to the inspection. Management monitoring and reviewing systems are poor. Key documents from children's files are missing. There is a lack of management oversight and evaluation of key documents, and after significant events occur in the home.

The quality of supervision varies, and the frequency of staff supervision is not in line with the home's statement of purpose. One member of staff reported, during a probation review, feeling overwhelmed by the number of shifts completed the previous month and the impact of this on their well-being. The manager did not address this at the time and did not explore this further in subsequent supervisions.

Staff recruitment records are not always in line with regulation. There has been a lack of professional curiosity regarding gaps in employment for two of four new employees. Gaps were not identified and explored during the recruitment process.

Team meetings are child-centred and focused on staff development and improving the quality of care to children. However, they have not been taking place monthly, in accordance with the home's policy. Staff told the inspector that they would benefit from further training around criminal exploitation in order to fully meet the needs of children.

The new manager and the responsible individual are aware of the shortfalls and have devised an action plan to address the gaps identified.

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 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 a 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>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(i)(ii)(iii)(vi))</p> <p>This relates to the provider ensuring that all risk-management plans are updated after incidents occur and that children are educated to understand risks.</p> <p>In addition, it relates to ensuring that the manager shares key information with staff so that they can appropriately assess and manage risks to children.</p>	19 November 2023
<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>	19 November 2023

<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>This relates to the provider ensuring that children’s records are kept up to date, and kept in line with Schedule 4 of the regulation.</p> <p>In addition, it relates to ensuring that monitoring and reviewing systems are effective. Managers should ensure that recommendations from the fire risk assessment are actioned.</p>	
<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;</p> <p>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) (3)(d))</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that all gaps in employment are identified and explained.</p>	<p>19 November 2023</p>
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))</p> <p>This relates to the provider ensuring that staff receive supervision at a frequency that is in line with the policy.</p>	<p>19 November 2023</p>

Recommendation

- The registered provider should ensure that staff provide children with education and support to encourage healthy daily routines, specifically sleep routines and attending routine health appointments. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 18, paragraph 7.18)

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: 1231458

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sherlock Healthcare Services Ltd

Registered provider address: Made Simple Group, 20-22 Wenlock Road, London N1 7GU

Responsible individual: Hilton Mutariswa

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Nateisha Cardoza-Evans, Social Care Inspector

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