

SC367551

Registered provider: Crystal Care Solutions Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private company. It provides care for up to three children who have had adverse childhood experiences.

At the time of the inspection, there was one child living at the home. The child spoke to the inspector during the inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since January 2023. He holds the required qualification.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 October 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

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

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

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: 11 July 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/07/2023	Full	Good
03/05/2022	Full	Good
08/09/2021	Full	Good
07/05/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Since the last inspection, four children have moved into the home and four children have moved out of the home. Moves into the home are well planned and include visits. This supports children to settle quickly. Three children moved on from the home in a well-planned way after making good progress from their starting points. One child moved out of the home more quickly as professionals could not agree how their needs could be safely met.

Shortfalls in the protection of children and the leadership and management of the home have impacted on children's experiences and safety. The manager has a plan for how he intends to continue to develop the home and address the shortfalls.

The communal areas of the home are warm and welcoming. A games room provides children with an additional space to enjoy, and staff put photos of children on display around the home. This supports children to feel a sense of belonging in the home. The home is generally well maintained. However, damage to the wall in a child's bedroom had not yet been painted over, despite the damage having been created a month before. A maintenance team is scheduled to come out to complete this.

Staff prioritise children's education, and the manager advocates strongly for children to ensure that they have what they need. As a result, all children access appropriate education. A social worker commented that they 'couldn't fault' the work that was done to secure their child a placement. A school representative commented that the home is 'one of the best' they have ever worked with.

Staff support children to explore their interests, and children benefit from a range of enriching activities. Children are supported and encouraged to participate in local clubs. One child enjoys regular football training and has started competitive matches with their team. All children enjoy holidays and trips out with staff. As a result, children explore and develop their individual identities and build positive relationships in the local community.

Staff consult regularly with children about their views on their care. However, staff do not always take action in response to children's requests. A child said that nothing was done when they asked for items for their bedroom. The manager discussed this with the child and ordered the items during the inspection. The manager plans to discuss this at the next team meeting and explore how they can improve their responses to children's views.

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

Children's plans and risk assessments provide staff with guidance on the steps they need to take to keep children safe. However, staff do not always follow the plans, and plans are not always clear. As a result, children have been put at risk of harm. The manager completes effective reviews after incidents, and he has addressed staff practice issues and updated plans and risk assessments. However, this change is not yet embedded into practice.

Children's complaints are responded to well by staff and the manager. Children receive responses to their complaints, and responses are well considered and timely.

Children benefit from regular discussions with staff about areas of need. Discussions are structured and focused. For example, a child who was preparing for independence was supported through planned sessions to build on their independence skills. As a result of good support, two children moved on successfully into semi-independent homes in line with their plans.

Children's risks reduce as a result of their time at the home. Incidents of a child going missing from home have been significantly reduced. Another child was supported to develop their skills in emotional regulation, and incidents have been reduced in the home. The child was supported to reunite with their parent in line with their wishes and feelings. Children experiencing a reduction in risk have a positive impact on their outcomes.

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

The manager is passionate about developing the home and improving the quality of care that children receive. The manager is responsive and evaluates incidents well. However, there have been gaps in the manager's oversight during this period that have resulted in some issues being missed. The manager has a clear plan for how he will address shortfalls and continue to develop the team.

The organisation is large and uses managers from other homes to provide oversight when the manager is absent. This helps to ensure that staff continue to receive good support and provides consistency for children and the team. Although oversight is usually good, on one occasion, a staff member raised that they had not had a formal handover before the manager's planned leave started. Another professional remarked that the staff struggled in the manager's absence. The manager acted on this feedback and now creates formal handovers before any period of leave, and he has put in plans to upskill the team through ongoing training and workshops in team meetings.

Staff have access to a comprehensive range of training, and training is individualised to children's needs. However, despite good access to training, multiple staff have made poor decisions that have resulted in the manager addressing their practice. For example, a shift leader made a decision not to immediately collect a child who had been missing

from home. The manager consistently addresses poor practice. However, poor decision-making by staff does not provide assurance that staff have the necessary skills and experience to always provide good-quality care.

All staff benefit from regular supervision, and supervision sessions are comprehensive and set clear targets for development. Staff say that they feel well supported. A staff member said, 'I couldn't ask for a more supportive manager.'

The manager communicates effectively with other professionals about children's care and advocates for them well to ensure that they have what they need from others. A social worker commented that the manager acts quickly on issues, and another professional said that communication is excellent, especially with the manager, who they said is always available to them.

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>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; and</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>In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff have the skills to make decisions that promote children’s well-being and keep them safe.</p> <p>The registered person must also ensure that they review documents, particularly after periods of leave, and use this monitoring to improve the quality of care.</p>	<p>3 December 2024</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>3 December 2024</p>

<p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</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; and</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff follow children’s plans and risk assessments, understand what risk looks like for children and take effective action to protect children when they are at risk.</p>	
<p>The children’s views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>develop positive relationships with them;</p> <p>engage with them; and</p> <p>take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children’s care and welfare and their lives.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>ascertain and consider each child’s views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child’s best interests when making decisions about the child’s care and welfare; and</p> <p>help each child to understand how the child’s views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(iii))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff take appropriate action in response to children’s requests in consultations and that children are informed how their views have been considered.</p>	<p>3 December 2024</p>

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that damage to the home is repaired and the home is maintained, decorated and furnished to a high standard. In addition, every effort should be made to provide a homely environment. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: SC367551

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: Adam Barker

Inspector

Laura Norcop, Social Care Inspector

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