

SC047894

Registered provider: Care Focus Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to four children aged between 10 and 16 years who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, two children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2023.

The children contributed to this inspection and the manager was present.

There is a registered school on site. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision on this site.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 September 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: 21 November 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/11/2023	Full	Good
09/11/2022	Full	Good
02/11/2021	Full	Good
26/06/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

There are significant gaps in the managerial oversight of the home. Children's complaints have not been responded to. Staff have not received regular supervision sessions and staff team meetings have been missed. The senior management team has recently implemented a plan to address some of these shortfalls.

The manager has not ensured that the home has been well maintained. There is undergrowth underneath a child's bedroom window that has not been cut back. There are buckets with gloves and various items outside both doors to the property. Some windowsills have cobwebs on them. This does not provide children with a nurturing well-kept home that they are happy to live in.

The staff lock the pantry to stop children accessing some unhealthy snacks. This does not help children to understand and manage their food choices. This is not in line with the therapeutic and restorative ethos in the statement of purpose.

Children's moves to the home have been planned relatively well. The staff welcomed one child with gifts and a card. The children said that they felt included in their moves.

Children's health and educational needs are met. Both children have made progress in attending the on-site school. One child had not attended school for a significant period before moving into the home.

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

One child said that they felt safe living at the home, however the other child said that they did not feel safe. Staff have been unable to de-escalate incidents between children. At times, the staff's responses have escalated their behaviours, which have resulted in children being restrained or witnessing restraints.

Staff carry keys to the rear garden fire exit on their keyrings. However, several staff members were unaware of this key and were unable to unlock the garden gate. This requirement was raised at last inspection and has been restated.

Children said that they know how to complain. However, children do not trust that their complaints will be taken seriously or processed quickly. One child waited three days for the manager to respond to concerns about a member of staff grabbing them. The child then struggled to recall the incident. There is an over reliance on children having to raise their concerns formally.

The local authority designated officer (LADO) said that the management team refer allegations when needed. However, there has been one occasion when the manager failed to notify Ofsted within timescales in respect of an allegation. This reduces Ofsted's oversight of serious incidents.

Children are offered individualised incentives by staff. Staff's use of consequences is generally proportionate. There was one occasion when a child was given a disproportionate consequence. Senior management identified this and addressed it with the staff member. The child did not receive this consequence.

Staff generally understand each of the children's risks and vulnerabilities. Each child's risk assessments are updated following significant incidents.

Children rarely go missing from the home. On the one occasion that a child was reported as missing, staff searched for the child and warmly welcomed them home.

One child's social worker's manager said that their child was kept safe by staff. Another child's parent said that they felt their child was safe at the home.

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

The manager has failed to provide consistent oversight of staff's practice and children's care. She has not consistently challenged staff's use of institutional language.

The manager has failed to see a pattern of escalating incidents between the children. This has led to two incidents when children have been found with staff keys in their possession. Children have also managed to view staff member's private phone numbers during an incident and tried to call staff. Children have also regularly locked themselves in bathrooms and bedrooms.

Staff have not had regular supervision sessions or team meetings. One member of staff's face-to-face safeguarding training is out of date. Overall, this limits staff's space for reflection on the children's behaviour as a form of communication.

The independent visitor has not consistently visited the home in person. The independent visitor's reports have regularly cited out-of-date shortfalls raised by Ofsted in the 2022 inspection year. These are not current and indicate a repeated report format that fails to drive improvement. The manager has failed to identify this or challenge the rigour and quality of the reports.

Staff said that they enjoy working at the home and feel well supported. The senior management team has introduced a new rota based on staff feedback. They have also started to hold staff group supervision sessions and introduced a new programme of training for all staff.

The responsible individual has devised new processes to support her quality assurance of the home. This includes sourcing a new proforma for her monthly quality assurance visits

and actively encouraging staff to read literature around therapeutic care. These changes are new and therefore the impact is yet to be evidenced.

Senior managers have recently recruited a new senior management team for the home

The manager has met one requirement from the previous inspection.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(1) applies to the home—</p> <p>the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that staff know how to unlock the rear garden designated fire exit.</p> <p>This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.</p>	<p>20 December 2024</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>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home.</p>	<p>20 December 2024</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)(a)(c)(f)(h))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that:</p> <p>staff receive regular, reflective supervision sessions and support;</p> <p>staff attend the required training in therapeutic care in line with the statement of purpose;</p> <p>dynamics between children are regularly reviewed and detailed to ensure that staff understand how to manage their behaviour in line with the therapeutic ethos detailed in the statement of purpose.</p> <p>Complaints are recognised and responded to appropriately by the manager.</p>	
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c))</p>	20 December 2024
<p>The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. (Regulation 44 (1))</p>	20 December 2024
<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>	20 December 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that just as in a family home, children should be able to access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. Limits on privacy and access may only be put in place to safeguard each child in the home (regulation 21(c)(i)). Any decisions to limit a child's access to any area of the home and any modifications to the environment of the home, must only be made where this is intended to safeguard the child's welfare. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child's needs, be properly recorded and be kept under regular review ('Guide to the

Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)

- The registered person should ensure that staff record information about individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('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: SC047894

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care Focus Limited

Registered provider address: 2nd Floor, 168 Shoreditch High Street, London E1 6RA

Responsible individual: Nina Campbell

Registered manager: Gabrielle Pars

Inspectors

Majella Russell, Social Care Inspector

Carrie Twinn, Social Care Inspector

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