

1183799

Registered provider: Quality Care Homes (UK) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the Social Care Common Inspection Framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and can care for up to four children with learning disabilities. The home provides long-term and short-breaks care. At the time of the inspection, there were two children living at the home and three staying for short breaks.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since November 2018.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 March 2025

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: 29 February 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/02/2024	Full	Good
10/05/2022	Full	Good
08/06/2021	Full	Good
10/09/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Before children come to live or stay at the home, staff make sure that they gain as much information as they can about them to make sure that they receive the care and support that they need. Children's care and support plans are informed by adults who know them well, such as their families and social workers. This promotes consistency for children who live permanently in the home and for children who access short breaks.

Staff encourage children to participate in decisions about their lives and use a range of communication resources to enable children to make informed choices. This supports inclusion for all children, including those who are non-speaking. While children's plans mostly identify their expressed wishes and feelings, this is not consistent, and staff are not routinely recording how they are supporting children to make progress.

Children benefit from a range of activities, and staff have made good links with local services to ensure that children have positive experiences and benefit from social engagement. Some children visit a local organisation to provide care and practical support for animals, and they thoroughly enjoy this.

Staff are keen to ensure that children are supported to develop important life skills, but this work is not always well planned. There is little evidence to demonstrate that staff are actively supporting children to develop their independence skills. The kitchen area in the home is not routinely accessible due to a keypad lock. This is restrictive and means that children are not being supported to develop their understanding of common domestic risks in the kitchen. The rationale for locking the kitchen is not regularly reviewed.

Staff provide personal care for one child, although there is no clear plan about how staff undertake this, which staff are involved or how this child is enabled to maintain their dignity and privacy as much as possible. In addition, there is no evidence that the child has been helped to understand what actions staff may take to help them be clean and maintain good hygiene. This is not good safeguarding practice and could jeopardise this child's rights to dignity, freedom of choice and privacy.

Since the last inspection, the management team has started to transition to an electronic recording system, although staff continue to use written recording for many tasks. In one example, staff use a notebook to handwrite positive outcomes. Children will not be able to access this information should they wish to understand their experiences of living in the home in the future.

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

Children are settled and feel safe in the home, and there have been very few safeguarding concerns since the last inspection. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of safeguarding and benefit from a range of training that supports them to keep children safe.

One child who recently moved into the home had a personal emergency evacuation plan before they had participated in a fire drill, which assumed their competence without clear evidence. While staff undertook a mock fire drill during the inspection, this did not consist of a full evacuation due to concerns about the child absconding, which may cause confusion and be unsafe practice for this child in the case of a real emergency.

Although staff use individual risk assessments for children, these are too basic and lack forward planning about the steps that staff are expected to take to reduce risks and increase safety. For example, one child has lived in the home for several years and their risk assessment continues to reflect that they are not able to understand or manage common household risks in the kitchen. There is nothing to suggest that action is being taken to address this, and assessments have not been signed by staff, meaning it is unclear if staff understand the expectations on them.

While most of the home environment is clean and well maintained, one child's bathroom has significant issues with mould and dampness. This has built up over a prolonged period, and effective action has not been taken to address this. Staff have not undertaken a consistent cleaning routine in the bathroom and there is very limited ventilation. This has impacted on this child's quality of care and has the potential to be harmful to their health.

In the staff office there is a surveillance camera that is used for recording medication practice, and naturally any other activity in the office area. This infringes children's right to privacy, and there is no consent by those holding parental responsibility for these recordings to be taken. The rationale for monitoring and surveillance is not underpinned by sound safeguarding reasons. Additionally, staff do not have access to this, and it is monitored by the management team.

Staff who join the home are not safely recruited. In one example, there was a substantial gap in the staff member's previous employment that had not been sufficiently explored. The management team is not verifying references or undertaking its regulatory responsibilities in relation to verifying why new employees have left previous employment in any roles involving vulnerable groups. This means that unsafe adults could be recruited, and this may expose children to preventable harm.

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

The foundations of good leadership and management are not in place, and consequently, a lack of oversight and monitoring impacts on the experiences that children have, and, in some cases, this may expose them to preventable harm. For example, there is insufficient employment curiosity for new recruits joining the home, and children's plans provide very limited information about how staff will support them to progress. In a further example, the registered manager has created a care plan for a child's personal care but there is a lack of detail about the actions that staff should undertake to ensure this is safe and appropriate.

The turnover of staff in the home is low, and staff feel well supported by the management team. All staff receive supervision, although this is at infrequent intervals. Staff have access to a range of training, and this is kept up to date. Staff morale is positive, and there is a shared sense of responsibility about providing care and support for children.

The management team has not taken effective action to meet previous regulatory shortfalls since the last inspection. For example, the statement of purpose has not been shared with Ofsted for a substantial number of years, and it has also not been updated to reflect changes in the home's registration conditions following the last inspection.

Although the home is visited monthly by an independent person, the management team cannot demonstrate how any recommendations are reviewed and how necessary changes are implemented. Furthermore, the independent person does not provide a sufficient opinion in their reports regarding the effectiveness of safeguarding and if the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being.

The registered manager has not taken responsibility for ensuring that the children's home is consistently maintained to a high standard. For example, staff have not undertaken suitable cleaning, which has led to one child's bathroom becoming mouldy and damp, and the bathroom lacks sufficient ventilation. In addition, despite persistent recommendations by the independent person, a separate maintenance issue remained unresolved for nearly six months.

Staff who join the organisation have dual roles and work within the provider's adult social care homes as well. Consequently, staff do not fully understand their responsibilities in accordance with statutory legislation underpinning children's homes. Children's records are not characterised by language that cares, for example, children are repeatedly referred to as 'service-users'.

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>ensure that staff—</p> <p>help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult;</p> <p>provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably;</p> <p>ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—</p> <p>meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(vi)(vii)(c)(i))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that all children’s bathrooms are suitably ventilated to avoid the build up of moisture-related mould and dampness. Staff must ensure that children’s bathrooms are cleaned and maintained to a hygienic standard.</p>	<p>20 March 2025</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>20 March 2025</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>In particular, the registered provider must ensure they obtain a full employment history and take all reasonable steps to verify references and the reasons why new employees have left previous employment in supporting vulnerable groups.</p>	
<p>The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if—</p> <p>the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children;</p> <p>the child’s placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance;</p> <p>so far as reasonably practicable in the light of the child’s age and understanding, the child is informed in advance of the intention to do the monitoring or surveillance;</p> <p>and the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child’s need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must not use CCTV to monitor medication and staff activity in the office. Any use of CCTV must be underpinned by formal signed consent by those holding parental responsibility.</p>	11 April 2025
<p>The registered person must compile in relation to the children’s home a statement (“the statement of purpose”) which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1.</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and</p>	11 April 2025

notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision.
(Regulation 16 (1) (3)(a)(b))

This is a repeated requirement.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are able to access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child's needs, be properly recorded and be kept under regular review. The registered person should encourage staff to increase children's domestic safety in the home by undertaking direct work to reduce any potential risks and increase children's independence. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- The registered person should ensure that all children who move into the home or access short breaks have an effective induction, and this must include staff supporting them to undertake a fire drill as soon as possible. Any assessments of children's ability to be able to exit the home safely should be based on evidence, and staff should ensure that children are fully supported to safely go through the entire fire evacuation process. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 57, paragraph 11.8)

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: 1183799

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Quality Care Homes (UK) Limited

Registered provider address: 6th Floor, Amp House, Croydon CR0 2LX

Responsible individual: Balwinder Randhawa

Registered manager: Ranjit Randhawa

Inspector

Ashley Edwards, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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