

# 1243966

Registered provider:

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This is a private children's home registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children who are experiencing emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. A primary aim is to ensure that the children access education and therapy.

There are currently two children living in two separate cottages within the extensive school grounds owned and run by the same company. The manager was registered with Ofsted on 12 December 2018.

**Inspection dates:** 14 to 15 August 2019

**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 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:** 12 February 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** sustained effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
12/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
27/04/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
30/01/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
19/09/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good

## 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, 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 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 purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6(1)(2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iv)(viii)(ix)(c)(i))</p>	<p>27/09/2019</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>27/09/2019</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 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;</p> <p>help each child to express views, wishes and feelings;</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;</p> <p>regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home’s care;</p> <p>ensure that the views of each relevant person are taken into account, so far as reasonably practicable, before making a decision about the care or welfare of a child. (Regulation 7(1)(2)(I)(ii)(iii)(iv)(e))</p>	
<p>The enjoyment and achievement standard is that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills. (Regulation 9(1))</p>	27/09/2019
<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 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>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>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;</p>	27/09/2019

<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 are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies;</p> <p>that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm;</p> <p>that the premises used for the purposes of the home are located so that children are effectively safeguarded;</p> <p>that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health; and</p> <p>that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12(1)(2))</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 (b) 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>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 ((1)(2)(a)c)(f)(h))</p>	<p>27/09/2019</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 employ an individual to work at the children's home; or</p> <p>if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the 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)(3)(d))</p>	<p>27/09/2019</p>
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33(4)(a)(b))</p>	<p>27/09/2019</p>
<p>*The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out—</p> <p>how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home.</p> <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 name of the child;</p> <p>details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;</p> <p>the date, time and location of the use of the measure; 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> <p>the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and</p>	<p>27/09/2019</p>

<p>of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and</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>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(1)(3)(a)(b)(c))</p>	
<p>Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home.</p> <p>The registered person must maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4. (Regulation 37(1)(2)(a))</p>	27/09/2019
<p>The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to HMCI. (Regulation 44(7)(a))</p>	27/09/2019
<p>The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months.</p> <p>In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the quality of care provided for children;</p> <p>the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.</p> <p>After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report").</p> <p>The registered person must supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on</p>	27/09/2019

which the quality of care review is completed. (Regulation 45(1)(2)(3)(4)(a))	
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\* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

## Recommendations

- Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care sets out the steps local authorities and their partners should take to prevent children from going missing and to protect them when they do go missing. Children's homes should have regard to the relevant aspects of this guidance. In particular, the registered manager should ensure that independent return home interviews are undertaken by an independent person. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.25)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes 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)

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Since the last inspection, the registered manager has not taken effective action to meet the requirements or recommendation issued. Children's progress has not been sustained and this has directly impacted on their welfare, development and safety. The lack of coordinated placement planning to support children effectively is placing them at risk of harm.

Contrary to the home's admissions policy and procedures, as outlined in the statement of purpose, not all children have had the benefit of a detailed compatibility risk assessment or a thorough appraisal of their needs. A placement was offered to a new child without the manager clearly identifying, assessing or addressing the full range of needs and family history of the child. Furthermore, full consideration was not given by staff to the subsequent impact on the children already living in the home

There is a lack of structure and routine in the home, and this does not support children to make progress. A lack of planning means that there are no clear strategies for staff to use to support children to overcome difficulties and reach their potential. For example, daily records for one child indicated that, in a two-week period, the child had consistently arrived late at the onsite school. The registered manager and staff had failed to identify alternative strategies to ensure that the child's attendance improved and they had not considered the impact the lateness had on the child's educational

outcomes.

The registered manager and staff do not understand their roles and responsibilities in caring for children. They do not consistently provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans. For example, staff had arranged a birthday party at the home for one child without considering the risks that those invited to the party could pose. Furthermore, one child is reported to require 2:1 staffing at all times. However, during the inspection staff left the child alone on several occasions and did not have an accurate understanding of the reason for the 2:1 staffing level.

Children are not supported to develop and reflect on their cultural needs. Staff have failed to follow direct instructions from parents about addressing children's cultural needs, in particular by providing food that is prohibited by their religion.

Staff do not ensure that children's views are central to the running of the home. Placement plans and other records for children do not demonstrate that children have viewed and contributed to their records in a way that reflects their voice on a regular basis. Numerous records include the comment that 'the children have not expressed any views, wishes and feelings today', sometimes for a week at a time. This does not show how staff are engaging and listening to children. Furthermore, some children's meetings are held without any children in attendance.

The registered manager and staff informed the inspectors that children have restricted time on their games consoles, and that this time is dependent on their behaviour. However, during the inspection this was not implemented. One child was observed to be verbally abusive and aggressive while playing on the games console, and this remained unchallenged. Timeframes were not followed, and one child played on his games console all day. Furthermore, the allocated time and conditions were not recorded in children's plans.

The premises are not suitably designed and furnished to meet the needs of each child. For example, some of the cottages are in a poor condition. In one of the cottages, internal walls and doors are damaged. Paintwork is damaged and requires redecoration. Some windows have cobwebs on them and they do not have curtains or blinds to ensure privacy. In addition, the handles on some of the windows have been removed and windows cannot be opened. This is a potential fire hazard. This does not provide children with a safe, supportive, warm and welcoming environment.

Despite the concerns raised, a strength of the home is the support provided to children to engage in activities. One child said that they had enjoyed a range of different activities. In particular, he said he had enjoyed his recent holiday in the country and the next holiday, which he had requested, is in a city. One child was also observed spending time with a staff member, planning a meal for the evening and laughing about the day's events. This demonstrated that some children are building good relationships with some staff. Children are also supported by staff to have contact with family members and their friends. This ensures that children maintain important links with their families.

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

Safeguarding practice in this home is not robust and does not promote the safety and welfare of the children. Staff fail to take robust action to address safeguarding concerns. An example of this is when a child returned to the home and stated that he was under the influence of an illegal substance. Staff failed to take appropriate action to monitor the child or seek medical guidance to ensure that the safety and well-being of the child was paramount. Furthermore, the child's risk assessments did not contain appropriate strategies on how to minimise further incidents of drug misuse.

The registered manager and staff fail to recognise, minimise or prevent the risks to children's safety and well-being. The home's arrangements to protect children from harm are ineffective. For example, when a child lit a fire in the home, staff and managers failed to review and identify the strategies required to reduce the likelihood of such incidents occurring again. This means that the registered manager and staff do not ensure that children are safe in the home.

Behaviour management at the home is poor. Staff lack effective strategies to manage the challenging behaviour of the children and are unable to de-escalate situations consistently and effectively. As a result, children have caused damage to the home and have threatened the staff team, which has led to police assistance being required to manage children's behaviour. This does not protect children from any unnecessary involvement in the criminal justice system.

When children have been restrained, records do not always provide a clear overview of the behaviour that led to the measure or evidence of an individual debrief with both the child and staff member. The registered manager does not evaluate the appropriateness or effectiveness of all measures used. Consequently, staff continue to use ineffective behaviour management strategies, and children are not learning to reflect on and improve their behaviour.

The procedures for when children are missing from home do not help to safeguard them. When children have been missing from home, they are often considered to be absent and not missing from care. Consequently, the children do not always receive the most appropriate support in line with the statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care. For example, the children are not always offered an independent interview when they return to the home. This is a missed opportunity to understand why they went missing and the risks they may have been exposed to when missing.

Fire safety arrangements are poor. For example, fire evacuations have not been carried out with new children and staff, as per the home's own policies and procedures. During the inspection, the registered manager failed to inform the inspectors of the fire procedures or identify the fire assembly points. In addition, main doors out of the home are locked. The inspectors were unable to leave the home, and had to wait for the registered manager to return to open the door. This exposes children, staff and visitors to the potential risk of harm.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate**

The children live in a home that is poorly managed. Poor leadership means that the home is unable to fulfil its own aims and objectives. The staff are unclear about the ethos and philosophy of the home as described in the statement of purpose: 'We offer our children a consistent environment and structure which will enable them to re-engage in care/education and develop a sense of self-worth through achievement.' Given the serious shortfalls highlighted in this inspection, the home is not acting in accordance with its own statement of purpose.

Some staff do not have the skills, knowledge and experience to understand the needs and risks of the children or to support and manage them safely. Some staff were unclear about whether they had received training and the impact this had on their practice. Furthermore, only two staff are currently up to date with training for the administration of medication, and some staff have not completed online autism spectrum disorder awareness training or face-to-face training on autistic spectrum disorder, despite both children at the home having a diagnosis. This places children at potential risk due to the staff's lack of knowledge and expertise.

Staff report that they feel supported by the registered manager. However, staff do not have access to regular supervision that should give them the opportunity to discuss matters such as the young people, training, personal development or any concerns. This does not demonstrate that staff are given an opportunity to discuss or reflect on the individual needs of the children or identify any strengths or improvements required in care practices.

Staff duty rosters fail to accurately detail the actual staff on duty. In addition, when there are shortfalls in the rota, records do not include the full name of the staff member or any other information to indicate whether the shift was covered and by whom. This prevents a clear audit trail of who is working in the setting. During discussions with the registered manager, she accepted that the rotas did not contain all of the required information. The lack of transparency of who is on duty potentially places children at risk and compromises the continuity of care.

Safer recruitment practice at the home is not consistently robust. For example, gaps in employment have not been explored as part of the recruitment process. This does not ensure that only the most suitable staff work at the home and care for the children.

There have been failings in management oversight and monitoring of the home to identify areas of weakness and to take decisive action to resolve these. Internal monitoring does not take place regularly and, as a result, the quality and standard of care have fallen to an unacceptable level. The manager has not reviewed some records in the home, or evaluated incidents that have occurred, in order to identify shortfalls in staff practice and to highlight patterns and trends. This means that leaders and managers are not taking action to improve the experiences, care and safety of young people. As a result, children's progress, welfare and safety are compromised.

The independent monitoring of the home needs to be strengthened. The independent person has failed to identify some of the shortfall's identified at this inspection. Furthermore, independent monitoring reports are not being consistently provided to Ofsted as required. This has prevented the service regulator from evaluating the quality of care provided at the home.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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:** 1243966

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Responsible individual:** Nusrat Janjua

**Registered manager:** Natalie Burleigh

## Inspectors

Lisa Mulcahy, social care inspector

Michelle Edge, social care inspection manager

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