

SC063219

Registered provider: Children Assisted in a Real Environment (care) Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to four children aged between 11 and 18 years, who may experience social and emotional difficulties and mild learning difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2022.

There were two children living in the home at the time of this inspection. The inspector spoke to both children.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 October 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 1 February 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/02/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/06/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
17/12/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
08/04/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff know the children well, and they are proud of the progress children make. Children are well supported to form close and trusting relationships with staff. One child told the inspector, 'I know they want the best for me.' The other child told the inspector, 'When I first came here, it was a big challenge. I was angry, but they gave me a chance.' This demonstrates that staff support children to make good progress.

Children's feelings, views and wishes are regularly sought and considered by the registered manager and staff and are documented in children's records. This includes children's contributions to decision-making and how children feel about the decisions made about them.

Feedback from key professionals and a family member is positive. They praise staff for their child-centred relationships, stability and the care offered to children. They also say that staff provide verbal and written updates and communicate concerns promptly. Staff support children to spend time with their families, and family members are encouraged to be involved in decision-making processes when appropriate. Consequently, children are supported by a network of individuals who work together. As a result, children receive a consistent level of care.

Children make good progress from their starting points. For example, one child who initially struggled with school attendance has taken their GCSE exams and now attends college.

Staff promote positive behaviour with the use of rewards for children. Furthermore, each child has their own behaviour reflection folder. This helps children to reflect on their behaviour during incidents. They consider their own and other's feelings and think of what could have been done differently to reduce the risk of a similar incident occurring again.

Children are supported extremely well to learn more about their culture and identity as well as other cultures represented in the home. Staff ensure that children are supported to celebrate their own and each other's special days. Key workers are allocated in a way that helps them to meet the identity needs of children. This helps children to develop a positive self-image and build their confidence.

Children are provided with opportunities to participate in a range of activities in the home and the community. Staff and managers understand that this helps with building children's self-esteem and sense of achievement. Staff capture these moments through taking photos that they record for children to keep, which means that they have memorabilia of these special moments that form part of their life story.

Children's bedrooms are personalised to their taste. The building is safe and secure. However, the home's premises are in need of renovation. Some walls need repainting. There is a hole in the ceiling in the lounge, which was caused by a leak. Furthermore, the inspector found rubbish bags and some unwanted furniture in the garden. All of this detracts from the overall feel of the home. The manager has taken action to address the concerns raised in relation to the home environment.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Managers and staff work hard to ensure that children are protected from harm. Staff work creatively with children to explore risks and vulnerabilities and to help children learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, staff deliver workshops to children on issues including mental health, child sexual exploitation and managing emotions. Children know that there are trusted adults who they can approach if they are worried.

Risk management plans are updated regularly and are of a good quality. The plans detail children's individual needs, their potential triggers and specific actions for staff to take in response to identified risks. This helps staff to identify, manage and reduce risk. Consequently, the number of missing-from-home episodes for one child have reduced.

Children who go missing from the home experience a well-coordinated response, and there is a clear plan of action in place to safeguard them. Staff maintain regular contact with children and encourage them to return home. Staff work collaboratively with families and key professionals to safeguard children. However, Ofsted was not notified appropriately on two occasions when children had been away from the home for prolonged periods of time. This compromises the regulator's external oversight of the home.

Records of restraint demonstrate that the use of restraint is proportionate and necessary to keep children safe. However, management oversight of restraint incidents is not always recorded. This does not enable leaders and managers to monitor the use of restraint effectively and identify any emerging themes and patterns.

Staff have established clear and consistent boundaries and manage incidents well. Incident records are detailed and provide a clear description of what happened and the action taken by staff to manage behaviour.

The registered manager and staff understand the procedures to be followed when an allegation is made against a member of staff. All allegations are reported to relevant safeguarding professionals and are investigated appropriately. When the allegations are made by children, they are formally acknowledged by the registered manager, and the outcome of the allegation is communicated to the child in writing. This ensures that children feel listened to.

Safer recruitment and employment practices need to be strengthened to ensure that staff's files include a written explanation of any gaps in their employment history and evidence of relevant qualifications. This would support a good safeguarding culture in the home.

Staff have completed safeguarding training and know how to respond to safeguarding concerns. When concerns arise, they are shared with key professionals. Furthermore, staff demonstrate a good knowledge of the policies and procedures relating to the management of allegations against staff and whistle-blowing concerns. This ensures that children are safeguarded effectively.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager demonstrates a genuine commitment to the children in her care and creates a culture of high aspirations for them. Leaders, managers and staff strive to make a positive difference to children's lives. Staff and children appreciate the family-style atmosphere in the home.

Staff's feedback on the leadership of the home is, without exception, highly positive. One staff member said, 'The managers encourage critical thinking; they want suggestions and ideas from staff. It's good to feel valued.' Another member of staff said, 'The manager creates a positive energy among the staff team which helps boost staff morale. This high level of staff morale also helps us to be more resilient in our practice, meaning we are able to still persevere and create positive outcomes, even when experiencing challenging situations.'

Staff say they feel well supported by leaders and managers. An in-house therapist offers monthly group consultations to provide an opportunity to discuss children's needs and progress. Staff have access to regular training, and a member of staff said that the training offered gave them a greater understanding of how to meet the needs of one of the children in the home. Team meetings are used effectively as learning and development opportunities. However, the frequency of one-to-one supervision sessions provided to staff, including new staff, is not in line with the home's statement of purpose. This compromises management oversight of staff practice and development.

The home's care plans for the children are robust and aspirational and consider the children's wishes and feelings. However, children's files do not include the care plans for children formulated by the child's placing local authority.

Leaders and managers have failed to share their quality of care review report with Ofsted. This is a breach of regulations and compromises the regulator's external oversight of the home. The registered manager shared the review during this inspection.

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 registered person must ensure that—</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>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; 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.</p> <p>(Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p>	<p>20 October 2022</p>
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety.</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.</p> <p>(Regulation 32 (1) (3)(d))</p> <p>In particular, this relates to ensuring that any gaps in staff’s employment history are explained and evidence of relevant qualification is obtained as part of the recruitment process.</p>	<p>20 October 2022</p>
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience.</p> <p>(Regulation 33 (4)(b))</p>	<p>6 December 2022</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</p>	<p>13 October 2022</p>

intends to take as a result of the quality of care review (“the quality of care review report”).

The registered person must—

supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed.

(Regulation 45 (3) (4)(a))

Recommendations

- The registered person should notify Ofsted if there is an incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home which the registered person considers to be serious. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 63, paragraph 14.10)
- The registered person should ensure that all children’s records (regulation 36) are kept up to date. Specifically, that children’s updated looked after childcare plans are obtained from the placing authorities. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.3)

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: SC063219

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Children Assisted in a Real Environment (care) Ltd

Registered provider address: 144 Old Oak Road, London W3 7HF

Responsible individual: Linda Blakely

Registered manager: Cassandra Ebanks

Inspector

Aneta Wasilewska, Social Care Inspector

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