

2540285

Registered provider: Footsteps Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care and accommodation for up to eight children. The home's statement of purpose states that the home cares for children with learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities and/or social and emotional difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted in August 2019 and the manager registered in December 2020.

There were six children living in the home at the time of this inspection.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 December 2022

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be 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: 18 May 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/05/2021	Full	Good
10/03/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress from their starting points. All social workers spoke positively about the good progress that children have made since moving to the home, particularly in education, social skills and family relationships. One parent told the inspector, '[Name of child] never used to interact with the family but now she does more with her siblings, she says more words, and has better eye contact. They gave her confidence, so she is coming out of her shell. The family is very happy about that.'

Children's views and wishes are sought through consultation forms, key-work sessions and house meetings. Children can express their views about their day-to-day care and the home. Children with communication needs are helped to express their wishes and feelings through means specific to them, such as symbols and pictures.

Feedback from key professionals and a family member is highly positive. They praise staff for their child-centred relationships and the stability and care that they provide to children. One social worker said, 'I am impressed by the way in which the carers keep our children safe, happy and healthy.'

Children's health needs are met well by staff. Staff support children in attending medical appointments and ensure that children have access to specialist advice, including child and adolescent mental health services or hospital specialists. Staff also ensure that children take their medication as prescribed. New staff shadow more-experienced colleagues and complete medication training before dispensing medication unsupervised.

Staff understand that it is important for children to maintain relationships with the people who are special to them. Parents and other family members are warmly welcomed into the home, and staff support and arrange for children to spend quality time with their family when it is safe for them to do so.

Despite their complex needs, the children are encouraged to participate in activities in the home and the community. For example, during the last summer holiday, children enjoyed trips to Southend-on-Sea and a holiday camp.

The home is clean, comfortable and decorated to a good standard. There are photos of the children displayed throughout the house. This adds to the homely atmosphere of the home.

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

Safeguarding practice at the home needs to be strengthened. The staff's recording of restraints, assessment and justification for the use of door sensors, recruitment checks, and staff's understanding of whistle-blowing procedures require improvement to be consistently good.

The manager and staff demonstrate a good understanding of children's needs and vulnerabilities. Children receive a minimum of one-to-one support, which significantly minimises the risk of harm. Children's risk assessments are reviewed regularly. They include all known risks, and set out specific actions regarding how staff should respond to and manage these risks. However, one child's risk assessment does not include the use of emergency medication as a control measure.

Staff have received safeguarding training and demonstrate a good understanding of the policies and procedures to follow if allegations are made against staff. This means that staff are able to respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns within the organisation. All allegations are reported to the relevant safeguarding professionals and are investigated appropriately. However, some staff members do not demonstrate a good knowledge of the whistle-blowing policy.

Staff are trained to restrain children safely when required. However, the records of incidents of restraint do not include the duration of the measure or debriefs with staff and children, when appropriate. Furthermore, an incident of physical intervention was not recorded correctly for one child. This does not enable leaders and managers to monitor the use of restraint effectively and identify any emerging themes and patterns.

The recruitment processes need to improve to ensure that all safer recruitment checks are carried out. For example, the discrepancy between the employment history and references was not explored for one staff member. This does not demonstrate that recruitment processes are consistently safe. This issue was addressed by the manager during this inspection and additional information was obtained from the member of staff to clarify the discrepancy.

Bedroom door sensors are used for all children in the home. However, the necessity of this measure has not been assessed for each child, as only a home risk assessment has been completed to review its use. Therefore, the rationale for the ongoing use of this restrictive practice for each child is not known.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by an experienced and qualified registered manager. The leaders, managers and staff demonstrate a genuine commitment to the children in their care and strive to make a positive difference to their lives. Despite the challenges, the registered manager has prioritised staff recruitment. Subsequently, there is a stable core staff team in place now, providing a consistent level of care and a family-style home environment.

Children's records show evidence of management oversight. This demonstrates that the manager has a good understanding of children's needs and progress, which helps her to make child-centred decisions.

Staff report that they feel well supported by leaders and managers, who are available and approachable. However, the one-to-one supervision sessions provided to staff are not consistently regular. This compromises management oversight of staff practice and development.

The registered manager has identified shortfalls in the quality of records and is working hard with staff to improve this. For example, not all relevant plans from placing authorities are up to date. The recording of key-work sessions, complaints and significant incidents also needs to improve to consistently include all relevant information. Furthermore, complaint records do not include the outcomes of the complaint or the views of the child.

The registered manager has completed the quality of care review. However, the review report does not include details of the action required to improve the quality of care in the home. This compromises the regulator's external oversight of the home.

Leaders and managers use learning from practice and feedback to improve the experiences and care of children. For example, the recording of children's meetings has improved following a recommendation from the independent person who completes the monthly quality assurance visits.

Managers have addressed three of the requirements and recommendations raised at the last inspection, two are restated.

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 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>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must monitor and improve the quality of key documents. These include key-work sessions, records of complaints and significant incidents.</p>	<p>6 January 2023</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>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p>	<p>23 December 2022</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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(b))</p> <p>This relates to ensuring that risk assessments include all safety measures to be taken by staff to minimise risk, including the use of emergency medication.</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;</p> <p>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 of any other person present when the measure was used;</p> <p>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>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</p>	<p>23 December 2022</p>

<p>confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that all incidents of physical restraint are recorded correctly and that records include the duration of the measure, debrief with staff that were involved and debrief with the child or justification why this is not appropriate.</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 monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child’s need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(d))</p> <p>In particular, leaders and managers should regularly review the use of bedroom door sensors to ensure that they are only used when necessary to safeguard a child.</p>	<p>6 January 2023</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they maintain good employment practice, as set out in regulations 31 to 33. In particular, this relates to ensuring that all discrepancies in employment history and references are explored. Furthermore, the registered person should ensure that details provided by candidates allow for any gaps in employment history to be explored. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are made familiar with the home’s internal whistle-blowing procedures through the induction process. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 53, paragraph 10.9)
- The registered person should ensure that they have systems in place so that all staff receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 61, paragraph 13.2)

- The registered person should ensure that the review of quality of care should clearly identify any actions required for the next six months of delivery within the home and how those actions will be addressed. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

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: 2540285

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Footsteps Care Limited

Registered provider address: The Orchard, Ashmead Drive, Denham, Uxbridge, Buckinghamshire UB9 5BA

Responsible individual: Anslim Narinesingh

Registered manager: Catherine Neal

Inspector

Aneta Wasilewska, Social Care Inspector

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