

2605554

Registered provider: Child First Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A privately run home which uses the 'Lovin' Care' approach, registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children aged eight to 18 years who may have experienced a chaotic early family life. This includes abuse, emotional neglect and exploitation.

There has been no registered manager in the home since 23 July 2021.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020. This is the home's first inspection since it was registered in December 2020.

Inspection dates: 27 to 28 July 2021

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 requires improvement to be good

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

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy living in a spacious home and benefit from individualised bedrooms, large open spaces and ample communal space. Children are at the centre of adults practice and children's needs are central to how the home is run. For example, there are plans to reduce the formal office space in the home so that children have even more space to enjoy.

Children are encouraged to develop and maintain important relationships with people who matter most to them. Adults have the children's best interests at heart and want the best for them.

Children are supported by adults to attend education. For one child, who struggled to engage in education, adults supported them to attend school and meetings. This allowed the child to have a stable timetable at school and complete their GCSE qualifications. The child now has a place in college from September. However, there is not always enough challenge from the adults team when attending meetings on the child's behalf. For example, adults could be more assertive about ensuring that a child's educational needs are being better met. This is a missed opportunity to ensure that the child is accessing a full curriculum.

Individual sessions with children are used to support children, encourage positive behaviour and provide informal educational opportunities. These sessions are an effective tool to address any concerns around people's culture and identity. Children can speak about their feelings and concerns and know that they are listened to and respected. Adults also take the time to educate children about socially acceptable behaviour. Children have benefited from developing their awareness of other cultures, faiths and traditions. This helps children to develop their understanding of the world.

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

There has been a significant number of missing incidents due to the risks that children have faced in the community. Adults in the home are acutely aware, and have a good understanding, of community-based risks such as exploitation. However, on one occasion when a child went missing, the response from adults was slow. There was an avoidable delay in contacting relevant agencies, and adults should have done more to look for the child.

Risk assessments and risk management plans are not always kept up to date. For example, one risk assessment fails to make clear the potential risk of a child wearing certain items of clothing. Although familiar adults know about this potential risk through direct work, there is the risk that unfamiliar adults may not be alert to this risk factor.

The manager has ensured that community risks have been considered. There is a focus on the risk of exploitation as this is a primary concern for the children in the home at present. There is good knowledge of local risks, and adults can talk about these risks with a good understanding. The manager has considered the advantages and shortfalls of living near the sea, and all associated risks have effective measures in place to minimise harm to children. This allows children to benefit from what is on offer in the community around them.

Adults acted quickly and decisively when a child was at risk of being trafficked away from the home. Adults identified the risk and notified relevant agencies. This led to the child being located before they came to harm, and further safeguards were put in place to protect the child.

Restraint is only used when necessary. Adults ensure that children are protected from harm and the measures used are reasonable and proportionate. They focus on proactive strategies such as education and de-escalation to minimise the need for restraint. Since registration, there have been two occasions of restraint. On both occasions, children were offered individualised care and support. This allows children to express their emotions safely and understand the impact of their expression on others in a non-judgemental manner.

Allegations are managed appropriately by the management team. The responsible individual maintains effective dialogue with the designated officer, and allegations of abuse are managed in a timely and effective manner. This means that when children make an allegation, it is taken seriously and managed appropriately.

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

Not all adults in the home receive regular supervision, and some training is outdated in line with the provider's timescales. This is due to a lack of effective monitoring from the manager. This lack of oversight means that the leadership and management of the home requires improvement.

Adults in the home are not all confident in following the designated officer reporting process. This means that there is the potential for delay in reporting concerns or allegations about adults.

However, the manager is knowledgeable about the children in the home and can talk about the progress for each child. The manager was able to speak of the risks children face and can measure progress against these. This ensures that the individual needs of children can be considered by the manager and the adults team, who understand the children that they care for.

Adults like working at the home and there is excitement at the positive changes taking place. These include the appointment of the new manager, the introduction of the new model of care and the appointment of a new deputy manager. This

creates a sense of excitement and anticipation. Children feel an enhanced sense of togetherness and joint investment into further improving the home.

Safer recruitment processes are followed in the home. This is completed centrally by the provider and all checks undertaken are verified in a timely manner. This means that children's care is delivered by appropriately vetted adults.

Children's plans are regularly updated and have clear actions to help them progress. These are mostly reviewed and overseen by the manager. There are occasions where the manager has failed to ensure that children's targets are met. For example, one child had a health need that had gone unaddressed.

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>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that adults—</p> <p>if the registered person considers, or adults consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans.</p> <p>(Regulation 5(c))</p>	8 September 2021
<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 adults— 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>(Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i))</p>	8 September 2021
<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— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that adults have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(h))</p>	8 September 2021

<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience.</p> <p>(Regulation 33(4)(a)(b))</p>	<p>8 September 2021</p>
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that individual adults in the home are engaged in the safeguarding culture of the home so they understand what they would need to do if they found other adults misusing or abusing their position to the detriment of the safety of a child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.14)

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: 2605554

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Child First Ltd

Registered provider address: 40 Oxford Road, Worthing BN11 1UT

Responsible individual: Michelle Wright

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Matt Nicholls, social care inspector

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