

2501566

Registered provider: Vitality Care Residential Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home offers residential placements for up to three children aged eight to 18 years old on admission who experience social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home provides emergency, medium- and long-term placements for children. However, the registered manager will only accept emergency admissions if there is no other child in placement. A small private provider owns this home, which Ofsted registered in February 2019. This is the home's first inspection.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 November 2019

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: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

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>demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—</p> <p>research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(g)(i))</p>	<p>20/12/2019</p>

Recommendations

- Examples of incidents that are likely to be considered serious affecting the welfare of a child include: a child being the victim or perpetrator of a serious assault; a serious illness or accident; a serious incident of self-harm, or serious concerns over a child’s missing behaviour, particularly where the child is considered to be at grave risk due to age or vulnerability or where they have been missing for a considerable period of time and their whereabouts is unknown. This is not an exhaustive list and homes must assess each case individually taking into account any patterns of behaviour or unusual behaviour which may indicate an increased risk to the child. Homes should also consider the frequency of incidents and judge whether their cumulative effect makes notification appropriate even if in isolation each event would not warrant this. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 63, paragraph 14.11)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive individualised care to meet their needs. This includes children with a health condition which requires the administering of medication and monitoring by staff. Staff follow clear guidance established by the registered manager at the start of the placement. Staff maintain a log of medical episodes and the registered manager reviews guidance on a regular basis to reflect medical advice. This includes, for one child, a reduction in medication dosage. Staff help children to maintain good physical and mental health. Children are making progress due to the care and experiences they are receiving.

Staff transport children who live far away back home to attend necessary medical appointments. This helps children to receive consistency in care. Staff also take children to visit relatives who are unable to travel. This maintains positive relationships and promotes the development of family identity.

Staff welcome visits by families, where appropriate, to the home. One father told the inspector that he does not feel excluded from knowing how his daughter is progressing. He stated that his daughter is safe and happy living in this home.

Children build trusting relationships with staff. Children living in this home can communicate using 'listen up' and 'grumbles' sheets which staff display in the dining room. One child told the inspector that she used the sheets a lot when she moved in but now she will simply talk to staff. This shows that she feels secure and confident with staff.

Children enjoy spending time with staff. They look forward to planning events such as a home cinema night or beauty pamper nights.

Staff continue to treat children who have left the home with respect. The registered manager reassures children and reminds them of their positive experiences even when risky behaviour means that the placement cannot continue. Staff prepare memory books for children living in the home, which helps them to build their 'life story'.

Professionals also describe good relationships with staff. They state that communication is excellent, and decisions made are in the best interests of each child. They describe staff 'going that extra mile' to ensure that children are safe, protected and offered every opportunity to progress.

Children living in this home engage in weekly art therapy, which helps them explore their experiences and understand their current situation and emotions. Staff receive training and consultation from a clinical psychologist, which helps to adjust care practice to meet the individual needs of children. Staff state that they receive guidance which helps them achieve positive outcomes for children.

Children living in this home have experienced difficulties attending school because of their previous education histories and circumstances. The registered manager liaises closely with home and placement authorities and advocates on behalf of the children. Where children have a part-time school placement or complete online lessons, staff promote participation. Children also engage in a variety of educational and social activities with staff. Staff explore community groups and are encouraging children to join. This will increase their social confidence and expand their social interactions.

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

Staff help children living in this home to remain safe. Staff follow risk assessments and behaviour management plans to protect children. Staff have also received appropriate training to skill them to meet the specific needs of children living in the home. As a result, incidents of children harming themselves have reduced significantly compared with their presentation at the point of placement.

The managers safely recruit staff who have relevant experience and skills. Staff understand safeguarding and whistle-blowing procedures. Children feel safe at this home and there have been no allegations of abuse made.

Staff recognise positive behaviour, no matter how small, and give daily praise to children. Staff are trained in a recognised model of physical intervention but manage behaviour with natural consequences and restorative justice. This increases children's personal responsibility for their behaviour. Staff encourage respectful relationships within group living. This promotes a safe culture where risks from bullying are minimal.

Staff respond by reporting and locating children who go missing. The registered manager encourages the completion of independent return interviews. Where the registered manager believes children to be vulnerable to gang involvement or exploitation, he works with agencies to share risk factors and improve protection plans. Ultimately, the registered manager has ended a child's placement when he has assessed that risks are increasing, and that behaviour is impacting on the experiences of the other children in the home.

Where concerns have increased with both frequency of episodes of going missing and new information or behaviour, the registered manager has reported this to the police and safeguarding agencies. The registered manager notified Ofsted of the first significant missing event. However, the registered manager did not notify Ofsted of subsequent episodes which, given the cumulative effect, are likely to have been considered serious.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager presents as a strong leader in this home. He has created systems and templates to support the effective running of the home according to its policies and procedures. The registered manager has designed process maps to prompt staff of the action they need to take in events such as a young person going missing.

The registered manager has developed daily, weekly, monthly and annual review systems to oversee and monitor the care provided. He uses independent visitor and service evaluation reports to reflect on service development and as a result he has made improvements to processes.

The registered manager oversees a stable staff team which provides consistency of care to the children. Agency workers do not work in this home. All six core staff are level 3 qualified and have completed a wide range of training to ensure that they are skilled to meet the needs of the children living in the home. Staff who are completing their probationary reviews with this provider produce evidence of reflective practice and increasing levels of competence.

The registered manager provides staff with training and peer mentoring to support them in their roles. Staff speak highly of the support they receive from him and of the opportunities there are to develop professionally. For example, the deputy manager acted up during a period when the registered manager was recuperating following surgery and will now supervise some of the staff. Staff enjoy working in this home. They are child-focused and want the best outcomes for children.

The registered manager is ambitious in his role and strives to create a sense of belonging among the staff team and children living in the home. He communicates with staff to thank them for their hard work and shares his ideas to improve the delivery of care. The registered manager also keeps children informed of what is happening in the home and within their care plans. For example, he prepared the children before his sick leave and upon return demonstrated to them that he was up to date with aspects of their care by challenging delay in identifying a suitable school placement.

Children have also been involved in staff recruitment, including designing and asking interview questions.

Staff work with professionals and each other to ensure that they deliver care with consideration to individual needs. This includes encouraging children to feel confident with diet choices and overcoming fear of the dentist and successfully undergoing a tooth extraction.

Staff receive regular and effective supervision. In addition, they attend therapeutic parenting training and consultation with a newly appointed independent psychology service. This service reviews the progress of children with staff and advises on strategies to meet the emotional needs of children. However, staff do not record adequately how the psychological guidance informs and improves care practice. The registered manager will be embedding this psychological model further into the ethos of 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: 2501566

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Vitality Care Residential Limited

Registered provider address: 6 Central Avenue, Bucknall, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST2 9AR

Responsible individual: Alison Fitchford-Raji

Registered manager: Jamie McNicholas

Inspector

Joanna Warburton, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

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