

# SC407929

Registered provider: Our Place (2008) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

A private company operates this children's home. It is registered to provide care for 10 children with learning disabilities (including autism spectrum conditions) and associated challenging behaviours. Children may stay after they reach 18 years old. The registered person operates a small registered school in a separate building in the grounds and another children's home on the same grounds.

The registered manager was registered with Ofsted in July 2017. The registered manager is appropriately experienced and qualified.

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.

### Inspection dates: 3 to 4 August 2021

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** **requires improvement to be good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

**Date of last inspection:** 27 November 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| <b>Inspection date</b> | <b>Inspection type</b> | <b>Inspection judgement</b> |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 27/11/2019             | Full                   | Good                        |
| 12/06/2018             | Full                   | Good                        |
| 13/09/2017             | Full                   | Good                        |
| 18/01/2017             | Interim                | Improved effectiveness      |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good**

This full inspection was carried out in response to a complaint that Ofsted had received relating to the conditions of the home and concerns about the behaviour management strategies being used by staff.

At the time of the inspection, 10 children were living in the home. Children's progress and experiences are inconsistent. Overall, children are making some progress from their starting point. However, staff do not consider how further progress can be promoted. For example, following an incident a year ago, staff had not reviewed a child's use of plastic plates and cutlery to eat her meals. This was despite the child using metal cutlery and normal crockery when eating meals in restaurants without concerns.

The home has extensive outside space for children to play in. The play equipment is age-appropriate. There is an adult-sized swing, spinning top, large trampoline and a full-sized zip wire. Inspectors observed children to be happy and enjoying the equipment with staff supervision.

In contrast, the home conditions are poor. The home's overall appearance is grubby and in need of cleaning. Some areas need repairing and decorating. There is a renovation plan in place which is due to start later this month when the children are on holiday. However, the staff have not considered how they can make the home look more appealing until the refurbishments are completed. Some children have boarded-up windows, due to damage or refurbishment taking place. The boards have not been decorated or painted to improve the appearance. Children do not have headboards on their beds and damage is not quickly repaired.

Staff do gather children's views in a child-centred way, using a Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). However, the children's views are not always actioned, which makes the direct work tokenistic. For example, children who picked how they would like their rooms decorated are still waiting three months later for this to happen. Children are asked to pick a colour they would like their room decorated in, they are all given the same six colours to choose from. Overall, children's bedrooms are not personalised.

Children's records relating to their care are poor and do not contain up-to-date information. Two children's plans that inspectors viewed contained incorrect staffing ratios. One plan detailed behaviour management strategies that are no longer used. Inspectors observed staff trying to support a child who was upset. Staff did not follow the guidance that was in the child's plan. The written information relating to the incident observed was inaccurate and did not provide enough detail. As a result, staff do not have clear up-to-date guidance to follow, and managers do not review the quality of care provided to children effectively.

The registered manager and the staff have unintentionally created an institutionalised approach when managing some risk. For example, staff do not eat with the children at mealtimes when in the home. Conflicting information was given to inspectors about why this was. One reason was due to staff needing to wear masks because of COVID-19. However, mask wearing did not apply when staff ate meals out of the home with children. A social worker told inspectors that her child was isolating in her room when she had a sickness bug. Little consideration had been given to how the child would be entertained to reduce the distress of being contained in her room.

Children's health needs are met; they attend appointments, and a multi-disciplinary team has been created to further support children's needs. During COVID-19, some services stopped, such as therapy play for children and toilet training support. These are hoped to be restarted soon.

Staff store and administer children's medication correctly. Any errors are identified and are investigated quickly. However, staff do not always put letters from doctors in the children's files. This was rectified during the inspection.

Inspectors observed positive relationships between children and staff. The staff have worked additional hours to cover staff shortages. This has provided children with continuity of care and has reduced the number of different staff in the home.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the children's needs and spoke about children with care and kindness. Parents spoke positively about staff, and they appreciate the care that is provided to their children and feel well informed.

Children's education needs are well met. Children progress well in the school that is situated on the same site as the home.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities outside of the home. These have been reintroduced as soon as the COVID-19 restrictions were lifted. Children have been on a steam train, swimming and attended after school clubs, such as Guides. Activities and trips outside of the home are plentiful, and these provide children with positive experiences.

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

Staff keep children safe in the home. Staff consider different strategies to help children feel safe. For example, in response to children running into bathrooms when they are being used by other children, staff have created a traffic light system. This prompts children to think before they enter.

When potential safeguarding concerns do arise, the registered manager responds appropriately and takes appropriate action to ensure that children and staff are safe.

Children are well supervised by staff. Some safety measures have been implemented to keep children safe. For example, plastic windows have been fitted over the glass windows in all children's bedrooms. While this is appropriate for some children, it has not been considered on an individual basis for each child. This puts unnecessary restrictions in place for some children.

There is a high level of physical interventions in the home. For one child, a deprivation of liberty order (DLO) is in place which allows for environmental restraints to be used, when needed. Overall, restraint practices appear to be proportionally used. However, the recording and the reviewing of these incidents are not as good as they could be. Staff who have been involved in the incidents are completing the debriefs with children. Debriefs with staff are not always recorded, and there is a lack of management scrutiny and professional curiosity.

Health and safety checks are in place and corresponding risk assessments are up to date. Fire drills are completed to comply with fire safety. However, staff had failed to take down fire exit signs when an outside door was no longer a fire exit. In an emergency, this could have confused and delayed the staff's and the children's ability to leave the home safely. Managers rectified this at the time of the inspection.

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

The registered manager has been in post since July 2017. Since January 2021, she has been overseeing the provider's other home, which is located on the same site. This has impacted upon her management oversight of the home and has led to a deterioration in the quality of care provided to children.

Monitoring and review systems are not effective. There are limited monitoring systems in place that evaluate and scrutinise the care and the progress children make. For example, the six-monthly quality-of-care review has not been completed within the required timescale. Furthermore, the independent person's monthly visits have not identified the concerns found within this inspection. These factors have contributed to the registered manager being unaware of the concerns and not implemented a timely action plan to drive improvement.

Not all professionals, including social workers, are not complimentary about the home. For example, social workers have expressed concerns about the poor quality of the home environment, the lack of progress children are making and the restrictions implemented when managing COVID-19 and sickness bugs. The registered manager and the staff are not currently working effectively with some professionals to address the concerns in the home.

The home's statement of purpose does not contain all the required information, including the behaviour management practices within the home and what training staff have had relating to this.

The home and the grounds are undergoing a lot of building work. Building works include a new school, ensuite bathrooms to some bedrooms and an extension to the

home to include an office and reception areas. The registered manager did not inform Ofsted of these structural changes.

Despite the shortfalls identified, staff spoke positively to the inspectors about the support they receive from managers. They reported that they had received a good induction that prepared them well for their role and received regular and meaningful training.

## 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.

| <b>Requirement</b>   | <b>Due date</b>          |
|--|--------------------------|
| <p>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children’s home is to provide care and accommodation (Regulation 5 (d))</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring that there is clear and effective communication between placing authorities.</p>   | <p>24 September 2021</p> |
| <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; and</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>ensure that staff—</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. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iv))</p> <p>The specifically relates to children’s plans being up to date, being followed by staff and taking into account children’s needs.</p> | <p>24 September 2021</p> |
| <p>The children’s views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p>  | <p>24 September 2021</p> |

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| <p>take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. (Regulation 7 (1)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to managers and staff actioning the views that have been gathered from children.</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 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(d))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the condition of the home environment.</p>  | <p>24 September 2021</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</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</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; and</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)(f)(h))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered manager's oversight of the care provided and to using monitoring and review systems to improve practice on the quality of care provided.</p> | <p>24 September 2021</p> |
| <p>The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1.</p>  | <p>24 September 2021</p> |



|   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| <p>(Regulation 16 (1))</p> <p>This specifically relates to including the behaviour management practises used in the home.</p>   |                          |
| <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>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 (3)(b)(i)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to debriefs with staff and children being completed and to them being completed by an appropriate authorised person.</p> | <p>24 September 2021</p> |
| <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. (Regulation 45 (1))</p> <p>This specifically relates the quality-of-care review being completed within the required timescale.</p>  | <p>24 September 2021</p> |
| <p>The registered person must give notice in writing to HMCI, as soon as it is reasonably practicable to do so, if any of the following events take place or are expected by the registered person to take place—</p> <p>the premises of the home are significantly altered or extended, or additional premises are acquired. (Regulation 49 (g))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered manager informing Ofsted informing when building work is being completed that alters the home or grounds on where the home is situated.</p>  | <p>24 September 2021</p> |

## **Recommendation**

- The registered person should ensure that medical information is updated when new information is provided. ('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:** SC407929

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

**Registered provider:** Our Place (2008) Limited

**Responsible individual:** Lena Graham

**Registered manager:** Sarah Davies

## Inspectors

Lisa O'Donovan, Social Care Inspector  
Debbie Bond, Social Care Inspector

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