

SC025733

Registered provider: Friends Therapeutic Community Trust

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a charitable community trust and provides a therapeutic programme of care for up to 17 children. The home caters for a specific range of needs, as detailed in the statement of purpose. The facilities include a registered, on-site school and vocational workshops to support accredited work-based learning courses. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision on this site. The community is jointly registered with the Care Quality Commission.

A manager has been in post since June 2023 and is not yet registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 June 2023

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: 5 July 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/07/2022	Full	Good
22/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
26/04/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
14/11/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

There were 11 children living at this home at the time of the inspection. Five children had moved out, with three of them doing so in a planned way. Staff continue to support these three children as part of the home's 'aftercare package,' which offers support to children for up to 18 months after they move on.

The previously registered manager has recently left. There have been widespread shortfalls in the management of the home throughout the period of inspection review. This included a lack of recorded management oversight, and decision-making. As a result, the current leadership team struggled to provide some important information at the time of the inspection. Leaders and managers did not have full information about some incidents that had occurred. However, the recently appointed manager has begun to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home and started to take steps to make the necessary improvements.

As well as the previous manager, some long-standing staff members have also left, affecting the stability of the service. Some children had strong attachments to the previous manager and miss her presence. Staff said that the interim management arrangements are supportive and helped them and the children to manage the change well.

On occasion, there have been medication errors. On one occasion, one child received a double dose of their medication. This led to the child having to attend the hospital for checks. The new manager had already recognised the need to improve medication procedures and has commissioned external support to reduce the likelihood of errors reoccurring.

Children benefit from a well-embedded therapeutic programme that focuses on their behaviour and emotional well-being. Children have good relationships with staff. The staff make the home feel cheery and a happy place to be.

When children are reluctant to engage in education, staff use their knowledge of the children's interests to encourage them to do so. This helps children to make progress with their educational engagement and attainment.

Staff prepare children well for adult life. The on-site bungalow is an excellent provision for children to experience independent living. The main home has several rooms with kitchenette facilities. These provide children with opportunities to increase their independence by shopping and preparing food for themselves.

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

Despite the recommendation made at the last inspection, some children's individual missing-from-home protocols still do not detail the timescales within which staff must notify the police should they go missing. In addition, risk assessments lack detail regarding the required supervision levels for each child, despite the very high risks present. These shortfalls create uncertainty for staff and have contributed to an ineffective initial response to missing-from-care incidents.

The importance of online safety is discussed with children. Online safety measures are in place. However, these are not always effective, with children having accessed inappropriate material. Despite the significance of these issues for the children involved, leaders and managers have not taken strong enough actions to address these shortfalls.

The local authority designated officer (LADO) said that the previous manager made good use of an advocate and an independent visitor after a child made an allegation. This ensured that the child had appropriate avenues to discuss their concerns with people external to the home. However, although safeguarding concerns have been referred to the LADO, on occasion, internal investigations have taken place first. This has the potential to compromise any subsequent investigation by external agencies.

Three community meetings are held each day. All children are expected to attend and contribute. Interpersonal, emotional and behavioural issues are openly discussed in these meetings. Children benefit from the structure and guidance that these meetings bring.

Staff generally manage incidents well. Incidents are fully reviewed and explored by clinicians and staff at the community meetings. Behaviours are not ignored or minimised. They are addressed with children in line with the objectives of their placement plans.

In April 2023, the home received accreditation from a national organisation in recognition of its therapeutic work. This accolade recognises the core beliefs and values that are central to the therapeutic community at the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

At the time of the inspection, a new manager had been in post for two weeks. The manager, along with a reformed leadership team, is beginning to make the required improvements. However, there have been widespread shortfalls in leadership and management that require addressing to improve the experiences and outcomes for children.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that staff consistently receive training in important areas relating to children's needs, for example managing sexually harmful behaviours and autism spectrum disorder. This does not provide staff with all the support they require to help understand children's needs. In addition, managers have not ensured that qualifications held by staff closely correspond with the required level 3 qualification.

Leaders and managers are unsure whether the location risk assessment was informed by feedback from external professionals. Therefore, despite the complex needs of the children, it remains unclear how effectively the risks related to the location have been assessed.

Children have access to an independent advocate. However, records relating to children's complaints are not sufficiently recorded. As a result, it is not always clear what actions were taken. Current managers were uncertain regarding the details of the complaints.

Managers have failed to ensure that four staff members have received their annual appraisals. Therefore, opportunities have been missed to review staff targets, set new objectives and discuss improvements in practice.

Leaders' and managers' supervision and oversight of staff do not consider issues that may arise from staff who are in relationships working together. Therefore, they have not taken action to identify and allay these issues.

The statement of purpose contains out-of-date information.

Management monitoring has not been effective. Leaders and managers have not consistently identified shortfalls in the help and protection of children. When issues have been identified, the actions taken to address them have not always been sufficient. Leaders and managers have recently started to identify and take action to improve management oversight in the home. These changes are in their infancy and are yet to be embedded.

Monitoring by the independent person has the potential to contribute to the necessary improvements. The independent person has identified issues and shortfalls in the monthly visits. However, the recommendations from the visits have not been routinely acted on by leaders and managers.

Requirements made at the last inspection have been addressed. Improvements have been made in the recording of consequences and restraints. One recommendation relating to missing-from-home protocols was not met.

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, The 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 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>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies; and</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)(vii)(b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that:</p> <p>managers and/or staff refer allegations against adults to the LADO before starting any internal investigations;</p> <p>activity and individual risk assessments detail sufficient risk-reduction measures to guide staff and keep children safe;</p> <p>children’s individual missing-from-home protocols detail the timescales within which staff must notify the police;</p> <p>managers implement measures to increase the safety of children when using the internet; and</p> <p>managers provide staff with clear direction and guidance on the required supervision levels for children.</p>	<p>28 July 2023</p>

<p>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children’s home.</p> <p>In particular the registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(b))</p>	<p>21 July 2023</p>
<p>The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (3))</p>	<p>21 July 2023</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>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; 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)(c)(h))</p>	<p>28 July 2023</p>
<p>When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (2))</p>	<p>28 July 2023</p>
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(c))</p>	<p>28 July 2023</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>The registered person must—</p>	<p>28 July 2023</p>

keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and

notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision.
(Regulation 16 (1) (3)(a)(b))

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they have made and recorded their judgement on whether the content of any qualifications held by individuals closely corresponds with the qualifications set out in regulation 28 (2)(c) (for managers) or regulation 32 (4) (for those in a care role). ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.13)
- The registered person should ensure that supervision of staff practice results in risks arising from staff who are in relationships working together being identified and mitigated. ('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: SC025733

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Friends Therapeutic Community Trust

Responsible individual: Kajetan Kasinski

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Lianne Bradford, Social Care Inspector

Paula Edwards, Social Care Inspector

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