

1226397

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A large private company operates this children's home. The home has been registered with Ofsted since 2016. It provides care for up to four children, who may have specific emotional needs and may have experienced trauma. The home does not currently have a registered manager. A new manager has very recently been appointed and is currently going through the onboarding process.

There were two children living in the home at the time of this inspection. Both were spoken to. Additionally, one young person who had recently moved on from the home was also spoken to.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 October 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 25 October 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/10/2023	Full	Good
30/08/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
02/02/2022	Full	Good
20/10/2021	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of inspection, there were two children living in the home. One of the children had lived there for over two years. Since the last inspection, three children had moved out of the home, and one child had moved in. The last year had been a challenging one in terms of staffing and leadership. However, children living in the home were making progress, and the best interests of children that had moved out of the home were carefully considered.

Children have positive relationships with staff. Staff have established routines and boundaries to help the children feel more settled in their environment. These are kept under review to ensure they work for the children. For example, staff altered the routines for one child following an increase in incidents to help them feel safe.

Plans to move children from the home are thoughtfully considered. There have been three children move out of the home in the last 12 months. Staff take the time to ensure children's wishes are taken into account and that future provisions are suitable for their needs. When safety is a concern, staff act quickly to ensure children are kept safe while waiting to move on to a new home.

The home is a pleasant and comfortable environment for the children to live in. It is currently undergoing renovations, which include refurbishment of the bathrooms, replacement of some furnishings and the building of a new therapy pod in the garden. The children's rooms are personalised. One child proudly showed the inspector their room and told them what they liked about it. Some areas of the home needed immediate attention, this included a hole in the wall made during the refurbishment of the home that had left exposed wires. This was addressed during the inspection.

Staff support children to attend and engage in education. When children are excluded from school, staff provide home education to minimise the risk of children falling behind. Educational professionals report that staff work well with them but could be better at helping the school manage behaviours, for example by collecting children on time and sharing information such as which staff are picking them up so that the educational professionals can better prepare the child.

Children are supported to engage in activities and spend time with those that are important to them. For one child, this has been particularly positive, enabling them to spend more time with their family and enjoy holidays together.

Children are supported to maintain good health and attend routine appointments and specialist medical reviews. The home offers a therapeutic programme, which children engage with to help with their emotional well-being. Staff take the time to understand children's specific needs so that they are best able to support their health needs and general well-being.

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

Staff understand the risks relating to the children in their care and how to best support them. Children's plans are well documented and provide staff with clear guidance to keep children safe. Children say they feel safe living at the home, and comments from partner agencies and relatives support this view.

Staff reflect on the use of restraint and implement changes to try and reduce the need for it. For one child, there was a high number of restraints used and subsequent allegations against staff. Staff analysed whether the use of restraint was proportionate and necessary, and they put in place a plan to help reduce them. Staff received specific refresher training to ensure that restraints were implemented safely. This was having a positive impact in reducing the need for restraint and allegations. Allegations were managed appropriately and involved external agencies as required.

Staff are clear about their responsibilities if a child goes missing from home. Staff follow agreed processes and work with partner agencies to help return the child home quickly. When a child recently went missing from home, staff discussed the dangers with them, and an independent return home interview was requested to try and understand the reasons for the child going missing. This has enabled staff to take action to reduce any further risk.

Children are supported to understand risky behaviours and why carers are worried about them. Children participate in a programme of learning to help keep them safe. The learning includes topics such as online safety, safe relationships and risks when going missing from home. The children are able to gain certificates to show their understanding of these topics and how to keep themselves safe as they become more independent.

Children understand how to raise a complaint and are confident in doing so. When complaints are raised, they are taken seriously by staff. Children are informed of the outcome of their complaint and any action taken. This empowers children to speak up when they have concerns and helps to make them feel safe and listened to.

The manager follows safer recruitment processes and takes steps to request references from all previous care roles staff have had. This practice reduces the risk of unsuitable people being employed.

Medicine audits and stock checks are routinely carried out by staff to support the safe administration of medicines. When medicines have been missed, they have been quickly identified, and medical advice has been sought. Staff learning and competency checks are undertaken to help mitigate the risk to children in relation to their medicines.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last inspection, there has been a period of instability in the leadership and staffing of the home. Two managers were appointed and applied to be registered managers with Ofsted, but both left after a short period of time. There has also been a significant turnover of staff.

Despite the leadership and staff challenges, continuity of the service has been managed well. Children are largely happy with the staff at the home and do not feel the staff changes have negatively impacted on them. The inspector spoke to three children (this included one child that had recently left the home). One child said that some staff were better than others, while another said that they got on with all the staff. A third child said that the staff changes were OK because the new staff came with 'so much love'.

To minimise the impact of staff changes on children, a senior regional manager for the organisation (who was formerly the registered manager) returned to the home to provide consistency for the children. During this time, they put in place an interim management structure. This arrangement consists of an interim service manager and three senior staff who have stepped up to provide continuity of care for the children and share the managerial responsibility while a new manager is found. The senior regional manager maintains regular contact with the deputy managers to ensure that they maintain compliance with the regulations and ensure children's needs are effectively escalated.

Feedback from professionals has been positive about the home and the support provided for the children. There is good reporting of incidents, which have been shared with relevant professionals in an open and timely way. Professionals are confident that the home provides consistency for the children that enables them to feel safe and make progress.

Staff speak highly of the leadership team and feel well supported. Staff have a good understanding of the children's needs. They receive regular supervision where they are able to discuss their learning and development needs. All staff either have the relevant qualification for their role or are in the process of achieving this. New staff have been given a comprehensive induction programme. There is a good uptake of training. When there are specific training needs in relation to a child, this has been made available to all staff to ensure they have the right skills and understanding to support the children.

The leadership team members have high aspirations for the children. They value the importance of education and ensuring the children's well-being. They are proud of the children and the progress they are making. This includes progress in education and increasing their self-esteem. When children have not made the progress that leaders have aspired to, this has been reflected on to ensure that any decisions made going forward are in the child's best interests. For example, where notice was given for a child to move from the home, staff carefully considered if this was the right decision and then

extended the notice period until a suitable placement was found. Staffing was also increased to keep the child and others safe.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendation

- The children's home staff should act as effective advocates for or on behalf of a child who may be experiencing difficulties with education or training matters, including, but not limited to, attainment, admissions, attendance or behaviour, as a good parent would do. In particular, the children's home staff should routinely share information that would enable educational staff to manage children's behaviour and support their emotional well-being effectively. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.12)

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: 1226397

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes Limited

Registered provider address: 3 Rayns Way, Syston, Leicester LE7 1PF

Responsible individual: Teyte Parrish

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Louise Naylor, Social Care Inspector

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