

1241970

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home's statement of purpose states that the home provides care for girls only, and can accept up to two children. Care is provided for children who may experience social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The manager was registered in September 2021.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 29 September 2020 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 March 2022

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: 18 December 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/12/2018	Full	Outstanding
24/01/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
25/07/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home provides an ideal calm and therapeutic environment, indoors and outside, for children to feel safe and secure. This home is decorated to a high standard and children have the opportunity to personalise their bedrooms. Some minor improvements are recommended to the external flagstones leading to the front door, to prevent accidental slips. And in the children's bathroom, the sealant around the shower needs to be replaced. A recommendation is made to address this matter.

Since the last monitoring visit, the quality of placements for children has been varied. One child has successfully moved back to her parents. The home offered a stable and secure environment for nearly four years for this child. This child has made measurable progress from her initial starting point.

The manager listened to and respected the views and wishes of this child when she wanted to return to the care of her parents. The parents told the inspector, 'The manager really helped us to settle [name of child] back to us. He really understood her and when we needed help with her behaviours, he would tell us what worked to calm her down.'

A local authority social worker reported good communication between the home and the placing authority. She said that, although the child had made good progress during the time she had lived at the home, she anticipated more trauma-informed therapy to help manage early childhood trauma would be needed. This would help the child to build emotional resilience and manage difficult emotions.

Children who present with highly complex emotional issues and risk factors associated with self-injurious behaviours have proved challenging for staff to manage. This has resulted in placements ending sooner than expected due to heightened risk-taking behaviours. For some children who have experienced multiple placement moves, early termination of placements reinforces their feelings of rejection and self-blame, which further impacts on the ability of the child to form healthy attachments with adults.

The inspector noted a lack of sufficient examples to evidence independence that supported a child's emotional resilience to manage day-to-day activities in the community. For example, the child struggled to be in social situations, maintain friendships or catch the bus to college.

Independence plans require a broader range of subject areas to ensure that children learn where to go for help with, for example, emergency services, legal issues and/or housing support and advice.

The inspector spoke to one child who said she liked the home, her bedroom, the staff and, most of all, the cooked meals. Despite the personal challenges and

emotional complexities around this child's mental health, the child engaged in several activities that helped support her wider social and emotional growth. The child joined the local cadets and proudly took part in the local Remembrance Day parade. Keen to help in the home, the child helped to decorate her own bedroom and the staff office.

Children are provided with educational opportunities. One child was in full-time education until she left the home. Staff have sourced, and provided, alternative education to maintain this child's learning outcomes. Staff engaged the child in creative, thoughtful and sensitive learning opportunities that were age appropriate but also took account of her emotional and mental well-being.

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

Children are offered therapeutic support and direct work with the company psychologist. This helps children to talk about their difficult feelings and emotions. The company has a model of therapeutic intervention with a strong focus of care and nurture.

Behaviour management and risk management plans are detailed and well written for children with complex mental and emotional concerns. However, the strategies in place to manage the risks have not had the required effect in avoiding certain risks from escalating. For example, children who present with self-injurious or suicidal ideation have gone missing from the home and threatened to significantly harm themselves.

The home has demonstrated effective multi-agency coordination with local partner agencies to ensure that children are safely returned. However, although requested from the placing authority, children have not had safe and welfare checks with an independent provider once they have returned from episodes of going missing.

Lack of monitoring by staff has resulted in a child obtaining the phone number for a family member. Monitoring of phone use is required to ensure that children do not become upset because of unsupervised phone time, which then leads to children going missing from home. This is particularly important for children who are still developing relationships with estranged family members.

Child locks were not effectively used to ensure the child was safely transported, therefore, minimising the risks of the child going missing from home. There is an expectation that staff have a thorough understanding of the controls and working mechanics of the company vehicle.

The local area risk assessment provides an overview of the geographical risks in the area, such as rivers, streams, motorway access and the woodland. However, the risk assessment places too much emphasis on children who may be at risk of child sexual exploitation. The assessment does not factor in the current risks associated with children who have suicidal thoughts and/or display self-injurious behaviour, and who are equally of risk of accidental and/or deliberate harm in the local area.

Initial referral and suitable placement matching information for one child did not fully capture their emotional and/or psychological presentation. Key pieces of information at the point of referral may have helped the manager to formulate a wider understanding of the child's needs and whether staff were fully able to meet her needs.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager presents as a compassionate and caring manager who clearly understands the emotional needs of the children.

All electronic case files are organised, up to date and easy to follow. Recording of incidents is detailed and thorough. The manager is swift to respond to safeguarding matters by involving key stakeholders. There is evidence of good communication and multi-agency working with schools, police and the placing authority. The manager has appropriately challenged on behalf of children, demonstrating good advocacy skills.

The manager is supportive of his staff and is respected by his staff. The staff are a nurturing and caring team and attempt to embed a therapeutic approach to the quality of care provided to children. Staff take part in regular team meetings, which are structured and detailed.

Managers and senior staff carry out staff supervision. However, supervisions lack a reflective component, to build emotional intelligence and help staff to identify any learning to support children with complex emotional behaviours. This would ensure that the home's therapeutic model is fully embedded to ensure continuity of care.

The manager spoke at length to the inspector regarding his frustrations with the placing authority for one child. The authority's actions had a direct impact on the child's care plan and lack of social work involvement. In support of the manager, senior managers in the company may consider escalating concerns to senior local authority representatives and commissioners to avoid such matters reoccurring.

Internal monitoring of the home is carried out by the manager. The report which covers the review of the quality of care should include the views of professionals and children. A recommendation is made to address this matter.

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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— 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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; 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; that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(e))	31 May 2022

The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— 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. (Regulation 13 (f))	31 May 2022
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure there is independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent monitoring (including under regulations 45) to ensure continuous improvement. The information should include the views of children, professionals and parents. The registered person is responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should comply with relevant health and safety legislation. They should ensure that pathways are designed to be slip-resistant. Also, the sealant in children's shower cubicles should be replaced. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that the home only accepts placements for children when they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans. Staff should have relevant skills and training to manage and reduce risks. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should ensure that, under regulation 46, they review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home, taking into account the current risks. The review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these, with specific reference to self-injurious behaviour or suicidal

ideation. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

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: 1241970

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

Registered provider address: 49 Whitegate Drive, Blackpool FY3 9DG

Responsible individual: Jacqueline Titterington

Registered manager: Lee Hayward

Inspector

Kamal Bhamra, Social Care Inspector

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