

1244283

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is one of a number of homes operated by a large private organisation. The provider states in their home's statement of purpose that they provide care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties.

There were no children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The home was registered in January 2017.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 May 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded, and the care and experiences of children are poor and they are not making progress

Date of last inspection: 22 December 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: not judged

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/12/2021	Interim	Not judged
10/03/2020	Full	Good
16/10/2018	Full	Good
31/01/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

At the time of the inspection, there were no children living at the home. The provider made the decision to not have any children living in the home temporarily between September 2021 and March 2022. This was while the home underwent building work and they appointed a new manager.

A child moved into the home in March 2022, but the placement came to an unplanned end in April 2022. The child did not have a positive experience of living in the home, and the overall experiences and progress of the child were compromised by poor safeguarding practice.

Education is not promoted in the home. Children do not have education plans and when they are not attending an educational setting, staff do not engage in any learning or educational activities with them. This lack of interest in children's involvement in education and welfare fails to value children. It does not teach them about consequences, and it does not make them feel cared for.

The statement of purpose for the home states that children live in a therapeutic environment and will have access to direct psychotherapeutic input. However, the inspector was told that when the child moved in, there was no psychologist attached to the home. Furthermore, there was no evidence of children receiving therapy or education or being supported in a therapeutic way. There was no therapeutic input referred to in the child's risk assessment or behaviour support plan.

Despite the shortfalls, a strength of the home is the support that staff provide to children to follow personal hobbies and interests. The child was encouraged and supported in their interest in horse riding. Staff had also started to support the child with independence skills.

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

Managers and staff do not understand their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children and do not take effective action when there is a concern about a child's welfare and safety. For example, a child who had expressed suicidal ideation had not been monitored as agreed in their hospital discharge plan. Nor had the child received support from the agreed number of staff in order to keep them safe. Consequently, the child was not appropriately safeguarded by the adults employed to care for them.

Leaders and managers fail to report allegations and disclosures to all safeguarding professionals. For example, a child made an allegation that they had suffered physical harm in the home, but there is no evidence that immediate action was

taken to safeguard the child. This incident was not reported and recorded in line with the home's safeguarding procedures and external agencies were not informed.

There is an inconsistent response to behaviour management in the home. Behaviour management plans lack guidance for staff to follow and managers and staff do not have the appropriate skills and experience to de-escalate children's behaviour and keep them safe. For example, when a child was distressed, staff locked themselves in the office and waited for the police to deal with the child's behaviour. This left the child vulnerable and unsupervised.

Restraint is not used in accordance with the legislative framework to protect the child and those around them. The views of the child are not sought before the restraint is evaluated. This means that children's experiences of restraints are not being considered or acted on.

Risk assessments do not all include clear plans for staff to follow to reduce the risk of harm. In addition, when safety plans are put in place with the agreement of other agencies, they are not followed by staff and managers.

Staff do not monitor the use of the internet and mobile phones in line with the child's plan. This means that they are not aware of who the child is communicating with and there is no professional curiosity. This practice leaves the child at risk of harm.

There are gaps in the recruitment process; important documents are not signed and understood by applicants when they are working in the home. This does not ensure that the integrity of all staff has been thoroughly checked to keep children safe. Furthermore, rosters do not include the full names of the staff and manager, or an accurate record of hours that staff work in the home. This is a breach of regulations.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The management team is not leading and managing the home in a manner that is consistent with the aims outlined in the home's statement of purpose. This fails to demonstrate that the care being delivered meets the individual needs of children or promotes their safety and welfare.

There are not enough staff to care for the number of children that the home is registered to accommodate. In addition, no night staff are employed to work in the home, despite the statement of purpose identifying night staff as part of the staff team. Furthermore, the staff employed are neither qualified nor experienced. This, alongside the use of bank staff, who do not know the child's needs well, has contributed to instability in the staff team and a child moving on from the home in crisis.

Recording in the child's plans and care documents is poor. This means that it is difficult to review and evaluate practice in the home to ensure that each child is safe and making progress. Some risk assessments and behaviour management plans fail

to provide the staff team with appropriate strategies to manage the child's behaviour or minimise risk. When plans do contain effective strategies, staff have failed to follow them.

The management oversight of records and challenge of poor recording are limited, with some serious incidents not having sufficient management oversight. As a result, shortfalls in staff practice and recording have continued and remain unchallenged. Managers have not identified several breaches in regulations that were apparent at this inspection. These breaches were not identified by any external monitoring of the home.

Staff report that they feel supported by the manager. Staff receive supervision sessions in accordance with the company's policy, and team meetings are held regularly. However, records lack reflection on practice. Objectives are not captured to support professional development or improve practice.

There is a lack of management evaluation to identify whether staff need to change their practice in response to incidents. This means that improvements to practice are not always identified, and the agreed strategies are not always implemented.

Due to the serious shortfalls in safeguarding practice and the poor leadership and management of the home, an urgent variation of the conditions of registration is imposed on the provider. Two compliance notices have been served under regulation 12, the protection of children standard, and regulation 13, the leadership and management standard. These notices will be monitored.

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 children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— develop positive relationships with them; engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a))	13 July 2022
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and a In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment;	13 July 2022

promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans; (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)(v)(viii)(x)) The provider needs to make sure education plans are followed and are up to 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii))	19 June 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— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(g)(ii)(h)) This specifically relates to ensuring there is robust oversight and monitoring of record keeping. Records must be accurate, accessible and demonstrate that the required processes and practices in the home are being followed. The feedback obtained from children should be used to inform the manager's review of the quality of care and continuous improvement.	19 June 2022
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a))	13 July 2022
The registered person must ensure that—	13 July 2022

within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure (“the user”), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; 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”)— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and 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)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children’s home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4;	13 July 2022

ensure that the records are kept up to date; and retain the records for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c)) This is in relation to the rotas including accurate information.	
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* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff, including the manager, act as champions for their children, expecting nothing less than a good parent would ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards' page 12, paragraph 2.8)
- The registered person should ensure that managers and staff encourage children to see the home's records as 'living documents', supporting them to view and contribute to the record in a way that reflects their voice on a regular basis. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.19)

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: 1244283

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

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

Responsible individual: Suzanne Grocott-Waters

Registered manager: Sarah Sladen-Mitchell

Inspector

Jessica Higginson, Social Care Inspector

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