

1259547

Registered provider: Semi-Independent House Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private provider and is registered to provide care for children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

There are two registered managers, and both are suitably qualified and experienced. One manager was present throughout this inspection. The other manager is currently working as a member of staff, although remains jointly responsible for the inspection outcomes.

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 June 2023

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: 21 February 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/02/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
23/02/2022	Full	Good
12/06/2019	Full	Good
27/02/2019	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children live in a large home which has recently undergone some renovation. They have been able to influence the decoration of the home and have chosen to have a games room converted into a gym. All rooms are homely and inviting. One child has recently requested to move to a larger bedroom, which was supported by staff, and they have been able to personalise this to their taste.

Children are making good progress at school. One child has been supported to continue at their previous school, which provides them with consistency of education. The manager communicates well with school staff about incidents that have occurred at the home. This allows education staff to know how the child is feeling when they attend school and plan for how best to engage them in education and support them during the day. Additional tutoring is also being offered to ensure that the child reaches their potential.

Children are encouraged to spend time with their families, and staff supervise contact when required. Concerns about the safety of family time have been quickly shared with the appropriate professionals and plans have been adapted. One child has been supported to make age-appropriate choices about spending time with their family. Staff have advocated for their wishes while also maintaining positive communication with their parent.

Children have plentiful opportunities to engage in the activities that they enjoy. One child has recently been supported to learn how to play the guitar, and another has been able to access a local drama group. Staff recognise that children can become socially isolated, and they are proactive to nurture friendships that are developing at school to counter any social isolation.

Care plans are detailed and enable staff to understand the children's needs. This informs planned and spontaneous key-work sessions with the children. Children engage well in regular key-work sessions. They are offered debriefs following incidents, which allows them to process their feelings. Records do not always capture the full conversation with children and occasionally do not evidence a warm and empathetic response from staff.

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

Children's risk assessments are detailed and individualised. They draw effectively on knowledge from other agencies and historical information held about children. Where certain risks become more prevalent for children, additional safety plans are put in place. These dynamically assess risks and offer clear strategies for staff to keep children safe. Risk assessments are currently spread across several different documents and are sometimes repetitive. The manager must be confident that staff

understand the function of these documents and ensure that these remain accessible.

One child who previously lived at the home was known to harm themselves. Incidents are well recorded and offer the context both preceding and following the event. Children and staff are supported to have a debrief conversation, which helps staff to reflect on how their practice can be adapted to manage risk. The manager has utilised voluntary support services effectively for children's mental health while more-specialised services are awaited. For one child, this maintained their placement for a considerable period.

Children rarely engage in risk-taking behaviours. There have been no incidents of missing from care or physical intervention. Despite this, staff spoken to have a clear understanding of their responsibility to manage these behaviours should they occur. The child living at the home currently has warm and trusting relationships with staff, which enables them to feel able to talk through their worries openly. Staff are not yet always aware of following risk assessments where behaviours may not be a presenting concern.

The manager is encouraging a therapeutic approach to the care provided to children. Staff have received child-specific training to understand the impact of trauma, especially on the children's mental health. Staff understand that children's behaviour can be a way of communicating feelings and emotions. The staff are encouraged to provide a patient and empathetic approach to their care while retaining an understanding of the underlying triggers to the behaviour.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is ambitious for the children and the home. She has worked collaboratively with senior managers to ensure that improvements have been made to the function and physical appearance of the home since the last inspection. The manager leads by example. Therefore, staff understand her vision and seek her advice. The manager has developed meaningful relationships with external professionals, which is allowing for consistency of approach with the children.

Staff are well supported by the manager. They are offered regular supervision sessions and team meetings. These offer appropriate space for staff to discuss concerns, while not losing the focus on learning and development. Staff say that they can rely on the manager and that they enjoy their work. Consequently, a consistent team is developing, and children are supported by staff who know them well.

The manager understands the importance of having effective auditing systems. Good oversight of documents is encouraging reflective and adaptive practice from staff. The manager has developed a document to track the monthly progress of the children and to understand the areas that still need development. While this has the potential to be an insightful assurance system, it is yet to be fully embedded into practice.

The safe recruitment of staff remains an issue of concern. Gaps in employment history for newly recruited staff are not fully understood or sufficiently explored by the manager. As a result, the manager cannot be assured that the staff working at the home are suitable, which increases children's vulnerability.

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 registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	30 June 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the behaviour management strategy is understood and applied at all times by staff and is kept under review and revised where appropriate. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.34)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information about individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 1259547

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Semi-Independent House Limited

Registered provider address: 51 Ploverly, Peterborough PE4 6HZ

Responsible individual: Amanda Charlie

Registered manager: Rebecca Bushell and Hayley Couldridge

Inspector

Louise Copping, Social Care Inspector

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