

1259734

Registered provider: Hampshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides accommodation and care for up to four children who may have social and/or emotional difficulties. There were two children living at the home at the time of this inspection.

The registered manager's post has been vacant since March 2022.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 November 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 **requires improvement to be good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 20 July 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

A monitoring visit took place on 1 September 2022 to assess progress against compliance notices issued following the inadequate judgement given at the inspection dated 20 July 2022. The provider was found to have met the compliance notices.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/07/2022	Full	Inadequate
16/08/2021	Full	Good
06/08/2019	Full	Good
25/07/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The registered person received an inadequate judgement at a full inspection on 20 July 2022. Compliance notices were issued and monitored on 1 September 2022. This inspection was scheduled within 16 weeks of the last full inspection in order to assess the provider's progress against shortfalls identified at the previous inspection.

The inspector found that the senior leadership team has worked hard to address shortfalls. As a result, leaders and staff have made good progress in areas such as promoting the welfare of children, risk management and record-keeping.

Staff have worked tirelessly through a challenging period at the home so as to provide continuity of support and stability for children. As a result, children have made progress in key areas such as education, risk reduction and positive behaviour. Staff provide individualised care that is based around a sound knowledge of children's care history. Staff recognise that when children struggle, this is related to trauma and early experiences. Staff are caring, compassionate and dedicated to delivering positive outcomes for children.

External professionals praise the resilience of staff. They recognise that staff support some extremely complex young people and remain focused and committed despite challenges they have faced. One social worker described how a child had not been able to find permanency in placements, and had been through a series of unplanned endings. After a turbulent start at the home, this child is now making positive relationships with staff. Recently, he has started to unpack his belongings and set up his room, which are positive actions that he has not felt safe to do for a long time.

Children have been able to improve the quality of relationships with family through well-planned and supported family time arrangements.

Children had been out of education for significant periods of time prior to arriving at the home. Children are now engaging positively in education and making progress. Staff support children to attend school regularly, and they work closely with education settings to share best practice. One child has gained access to some creative alternative education provision. This has re-energised their motivation to learn. As a result, they are on a carefully planned phased return to full-time education.

One child spoke about the impact of other children's behaviour in the home. The child was honest about how this had affected them but was able to identify progress and improvements. Staff are fully aware of the impact of children's behaviour on other children in the home. They have clear plans to ensure that all children are afforded opportunities for dedicated one-to-one time, and are working hard to provide stability and security for all children.

Children benefit from a well-maintained and comfortable home. Children have opportunities to personalise their own rooms and contribute to discussions about further enhancements and improvements to the communal areas. Staff provide lots of choice in activities for children. Children live busy and active lives at the home and in the community.

One child, approaching the end of their time at the home, has been given opportunities to put forward their ideas of where they might move to next. Staff and the placing social worker are thinking ahead and ensuring the best chance of success for this move as it approaches.

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

The current manager has placed a strong focus on effective risk management, improving staff practice, and helping to keep some very vulnerable children safe. Staff complete clear risk assessments and share a good understanding of associated strategies that help to keep children safe. Risk assessments show evidence of regular review, particularly after an incident. This ensures that strategies and information are current and specific to the individual risks and needs of children.

Staff have faced some significant challenges in managing the behaviours of one child. However, they have demonstrated resilience and determination to make the placement work. Staff have delivered consistent and predictable responses to the child, and this has supported a significant reduction in the frequency and severity of incidents. Some creative use of agency staff, with specialist skills around behaviour management for complex children, has been a successful initiative. This has provided staff with the expertise they need to support the child to make significant positive changes in the way they interact with staff and the environment.

Staff have helped to reduce the risk of children going missing from care, and in turn, this has reduced their exposure to risks around criminal or sexual exploitation. Staff have supported children to reduce self-harming behaviour. Consequently, staff act swiftly to reduce risk when any new or unexpected behaviours emerge.

Staff work closely with a range of agencies to support the safety and well-being of children. For example, staff use external support agencies to support children at risk of substance misuse. Effective communication and sharing of information have supported all professionals around children to deliver consistent and predictable messaging.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The home has been judged requires improvement to be good in leadership and management because there is currently no permanent manager in place and the post has been vacant since March 2022. While the provider has taken steps to recruit for a new manager, this has yet to be successful. As a result, the leadership arrangements at the home are subject to some uncertainty going forward. Current

interim management arrangements are providing good support for children and staff alike. The interim manager inspires the confidence of her team. Staff describe her as hands on and always willing to provide support and guidance when required.

The interim manager shows a clear commitment to the well-being of the children in her care. She talks confidently about their goals and targets and can identify key progress indicators.

Staff are well supported. Staff are honest about the pressures they felt when the atmosphere at the home was unsettled. However, they describe a positive period at the home. They feel that the interim manager has provided the stable and consistent input they need to help them through a turbulent period.

The interim manager has effective oversight of all practice at the home. She reviews all records and reports and provides constructive feedback for staff in order to promote continual professional development.

Senior leaders are working hard to restore the home to full staffing levels and secure a permanent management solution. However, this work has been difficult in a very challenging recruitment market. However, the responsible individual was able to describe ambitious strategies to improve both the recruitment and retention of staff.

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 provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and the registered provider— is an organisation or a partnership. (Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(i)) In particular, the registered person must appoint and register a suitable manager.	31 December 2022

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: 1259734

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Hampshire Council, 3rd Floor, Elizabeth II Court
North, The Castle, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 8UG

Responsible individual: John Stacey

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Peter Jackson, Social Care Inspector

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