

1259734

Registered provider: Hampshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a purpose-built local authority home. It provides care and accommodation for up to four children. The statement of purpose states that it 'helps children and young people recover from experiences which have rendered them vulnerable and disrupted their primary relationships'. The home uses the 'Pillars of Parenting' approach to inform its work with children.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in September 2017.

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 August 2019

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: 25 July 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/07/2018	Full	Good
19/02/2018	Full	Good

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
In order to meet the positive relationships standard the registered person must ensure: that staff are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same. (Regulation 11 (2)(a)(x)) In particular, give newly appointed staff formal supervision or recorded review of progress frequently enough to ensure that they are supported during their induction.	07/09/2019
The registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children's home if the individual satisfies the requirement that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (2)(d)) Specifically, a full employment history, together with a satisfactory explanation of any gaps in employment, is obtained in writing.	07/09/2019
The registered person must maintain case records for each child which are kept up to date and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(b)(c)) This includes the name and designation of those who sign documents being made clear.	07/09/2019

Recommendations

- Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)

In particular, staff should record discussions with children in informal situations that address significant issues so that actions for them and the child are clear. Children should be invited to read and sign these records, unless to do so would be unhelpful.

- The registered person should have a workforce plan which should:
 - Detail the processes and agreed timescales for staff to achieve induction, probation and any core training (such as safeguarding and health and safety and mandatory qualifications);
 - Detail the process and timescales for supervision of practice and keep appropriate records for staff in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

These should include the timescales for supervision during or review of induction for new staff.
 - The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- In particular, assessments of the impact of a placement must cover all known risks prior to admission.
- The registered person must challenge (under Regulation 5 (c)) any placing authority who asks them to accept a child in the absence of a complete and current relevant plan, as the expectation that a placement of a child without the necessary information would go ahead (in circumstances other than an emergency) is inadequate in relation to their role. It is essential that homes understand what will be required of them before they accept responsibility for a child's placement, to avoid disruption and instability for the child in future and for other children in the home. For non-looked-after children, the home should ensure they have sufficient information from the child's 'placing authority' (usually their parents/carers) and other relevant agencies to effectively assess whether they can meet the child's needs before agreeing to the placement. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.5)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Mealtimes typify the atmosphere that staff seek to create in the home. Those the inspector experienced were positive, social occasions, with staff providing praise and encouragement, and there was good humour between those eating together. Conversations ranged from the previous day's activities, arrangements to see family members and managing relationships.

Managers and staff show positive regard for children in difficult circumstances. They acknowledged the validity of children's feelings when frustrated by rules, while also

explaining why they need to be kept. Staff also demonstrate care when children act in ways that seemingly reject them. As a result, children have built trusting relationships with adults as they experience care that is unconditional.

Secure relationships and consistent practice have helped children to make progress. One child said, 'I used to struggle to leave contact with my family, but I don't now because I know staff will take me back.' She also said, 'They've helped a lot at school and I knuckle down.'

Staff help children to manage their health conditions and assessments are in place for them to self-medicate as required. This promotes personal responsibility and efficacy.

Staff warmly welcome new children even when the move has been problematic. They have, for example, planned favourite activities for children to participate in soon after arrival. When children leave, staff work hard to promote a positive ending and make children's well-being central to planning and practice.

Conflict between children, and between children and adults, is managed well and promotes the restoration of relationships, even if this takes time to achieve. Managers and staff have taken effective action to prevent situations from escalating and then to work with those involved to resolve differences. This helps children to see that conflicts can be overcome without resorting to aggression.

Children complete an 'All about me' contribution to the home's placement plans and, if children attend their planning meetings, staff include views from children's planning meetings too. In addition, children are involved in drawing up monthly planners that arrange forthcoming activities.

Staff find that children prefer ad hoc conversations with them rather than formal key-work sessions and that this allows freer discussion. Many of these are written up as real conversations but are not read by the children and do not include actions that are subsequently reviewed. There is therefore a potential for staff or children not to follow these through.

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

Children named trusted adults in the home and elsewhere who they can talk to about concerns and were confident that staff would deal with their concerns. They gave examples of how adults had listened to their views and as you said, we did display reinforces the fact that children's views are important.

Children have been able to confide in adults about unpleasant experiences despite being anxious about the consequences. One professional said that she was 'very impressed' with the staff member who made support of a child her full priority and was instrumental in helping the child to take matters forward. It is unlikely that there would have been a constructive outcome without the staff member having already established a positive relationship with the child and the reassurance that she was then able to provide at

every step.

Staff understand the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child's safety, including in the event of a child going missing or if they do not believe that effective action has been taken to safeguard children. Staff make effective dynamic risk assessments to ensure that children remain safe as circumstances change, consulting with others as appropriate. In doing so, managers and staff have successfully balanced children's wishes for autonomy and the need for safety to maintain an acceptable level of risk.

The efforts made by the manager and staff to support one young person who could not be brought back to the home included frequent contact, long journeys to see her and working with local professionals. In doing so, adults from the home conveyed that they wanted the best for her and as a result, the young person continues to seek advice and support from the staff she knows at the home even though she has moved on.

One social worker described the home doing 'exceptional work with [this] young person at high risk to manage the risks we worked with. They were good at sharing information, risk assessments and doing the work necessary.'

Managers had identified gaps in an applicant's employment history during recruitment but had not obtained a full explanation before the person started work. There is no indication that the worker posed any threat to children but the lack of vigilance could have allowed someone to have hidden relevant information.

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

The management of the home has been stretched over recent months, with a change of responsible individual, the registered manager being on maternity leave and other leaders in the home having been away for significant periods of time. This has led to team meetings happening less frequently and not all staff having the required level of supervision. Staff have expressed disquiet in various forums, including about morale, support and the cohesiveness of the team but were more positive at the time of the inspection than before.

A buddy system to support new workers from within the team has worked well, but a supervision session or a review of their induction by a manager has not taken place until six or seven weeks into employment. This means that new staff have not had a formal opportunity to discuss, and have recorded, potentially important matters at a formative time in their roles. The provider's supervision policy does not provide guidance as to the level of support that staff can expect while undertaking their induction and probation, unless they are newly qualified social workers.

Managers undertake impact risk assessments to consider issues that new children coming to the home could pose for those already living there. There is evidence that some potential placements have been declined as unsuitable as a result, so protecting the interests of all the children. For one child, the manager wrote an assessment some

months before the child arrived, and it did not include significant risks that were prevalent historically and again current prior to admission. Although well known to staff, there were no written details about how they should manage these risks. A lack of informative paperwork provided by the local authority exacerbated the situation. Staff did challenge and make extensive efforts to obtain the appropriate documentation, including before the placement started, but there was no evidence to show that managers had escalated the concerns.

The independent person's Regulation 44 reports have not been of a high standard, but the provider is aware of this and is taking steps to review and improve reports across the organisation.

Managers have taken steps to address the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection. However, there are still a significant number of documents or entries on files that are undated or where the author does not make it clear who they are, sometimes because a printed name does not accompany a decipherable signature.

The manager has a development plan for the home that demonstrates that she has a thorough understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses. Actions are being put in place to make the improvements desired.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: Lauren Moloney

Inspector

Chris Peel: social care inspector

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