

1259734

Registered provider: Hampshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the Social Care Common Inspection Framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a local authority. It provides care for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the inspection, there were three children living in the home.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since July 2024.

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 August 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 2 November 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/11/2022	Full	Good
20/07/2022	Full	Inadequate
16/08/2021	Full	Good
06/08/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

The home has recently reopened following an extended period of closure. Managers aspire to support children to return to live with their families. For two children, these plans are at risk due to the difficulties the children are experiencing, which are caused by the unsettled nature of the home.

Despite good intentions, the staff team has struggled to consistently manage children's behavioural needs, and the impact of this is a high number of serious incidents. Consequently, children have not made good progress since moving to the home.

Not all children's moves into the home have been well planned. In one example, the management team was unable to gain a full understanding of a child's presenting needs and background history, even though this child moved from one of the organisation's other homes. In addition, this child moved into the home very suddenly, despite being very unsettled in their previous home. The registered manager challenged senior leaders and requested a more structured transition, but this was not put in place.

Three children moved into the home in the same week, which meant they did not have sufficient time to settle. This had a negative impact on the capacity of the staff team to support children's emerging needs, manage peer dynamics and implement positive boundaries for children. Some staff feel that the presenting needs and developmental stages of children in the home mean they are not well matched.

Staff are supporting children to develop strategies and skills to manage their emotions and feelings. However, the staff team has struggled to maintain a consistent approach, and there are times when staff need to call the police to manage children's behaviour.

Staff ensure that children's health needs are met. All children have been registered with appropriate healthcare professionals since moving to the home.

Children have access to a wide range of activities. The staff team is working to keep evidence of these positive experiences, which children could take with them when they move on from the home.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Some children are yet to receive the help and support they need to thrive. The registered manager has identified the support that children require, but they are not

yet receiving this support. For example, over-optimism about one child's progress before they moved to the home meant that important referrals to support services were not made as part of their transition. Significant concerns have arisen about this child's safety while out in the community, and the contributing risks are not yet fully understood.

At times, staff have struggled to manage relationships between children in the home, and this sometimes leads to children physically harming each other. One child does not always feel safe, and on occasion they have called the police following incidents with peers.

Staff have frequently needed to use physical restraint to ensure children's safety. Staff use their professional judgement about how best to support children. There have been several occasions when physical restraint has been ineffective, and children's behaviour has escalated after physical support has ended. The result is that the culture of staff using their professional judgement means that the approach for children is not always consistent.

Staff who are new to the home are appropriately vetted, and there is a clear induction plan. However, the difficulties at the home have had a negative impact on staff morale, particularly for newer staff. While there are several gaps in staff training, all staff have completed safeguarding training. The management team is focusing on ensuring that staff receive other training within the organisation's intended timescales.

Children are supported to take appropriate risks in accordance with their individual plans. The staff team has positive aspirations for children and is eager to support children to increase their independence and autonomy. Staff are continuing to support children to develop positive boundaries and encourage them to make safe choices in their lives.

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

The registered manager has a clear vision for the home and high aspirations for children. However, the changing or emerging needs of children since moving to the home have had a negative impact on the management team's ability to implement some of the plans it has. The registered manager remains committed to creating a positive environment for children and staff.

The management team has demonstrated a reflective learning culture and is keen to learn when things do not go to plan. The staff team continues to be aspirational for children and motivated about supporting them to achieve positive outcomes.

Managers have been visible and good role models for staff. Despite this, some staff have decided to move on from the home or are currently working in other homes due to the difficult experiences they have had since the home reopened.

The staff team has predominantly built positive working relationships with children's parents and their social workers. However, the relationship with one child's social worker has been poor, and this has caused several delays in important decisions being made for the child. While the registered manager has been proactive in challenging senior leaders and advocating on behalf of the child, this has had very limited impact. During the inspection, a new social worker was allocated for this child.

The registered manager has demonstrated a strong commitment to ensuring effective monitoring and oversight. Information-sharing with the regulator has been transparent and demonstrates the actions that the staff team has taken to keep children safe. The staff team also demonstrates positive information-sharing with children's families. Weekly updates promote strong partnership working.

Children's local authority care plans have not progressed since moving to the home. Although plans reflect clear aspirations of reunification for children to their birth families, the changing needs or the emergence of safeguarding concerns for children since moving to the home have impacted on this. For two children, their respective family members have expressed concerns about the future likelihood of them returning home, given their current presenting needs and risks.

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, The 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; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iv)(v)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that there is no delay in identifying support services for children when safeguarding concerns arise. The registered person must ensure that staff provide a consistent approach to managing children's behavioural needs.	4 October 2024
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—	4 October 2024

lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; 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; 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(f)(g)(ii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that children are supported to meet their potential and that the needs and care plans of children are fully understood in accordance with the aspirations for children set out in the home's statement of purpose. The registered person must demonstrate that all necessary information, including feedback on children's experiences and presenting needs, is fully considered in determining which children may potentially live in the home.	
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans; and seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5 (a)(c)(d))	27 December 2024

In particular, the registered person must ensure that the local authority social worker is engaged in all decisions relating to children's care. The registered person should ensure that they work effectively with senior leaders to enable children to receive the necessary support and help they require from their allocated social worker, in accordance with their presenting needs. The registered person should seek to develop effective working partnerships with the police in ensuring that the needs of children and the responsibilities of the wider staff team are met.	
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 arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(i)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that any children moving into the home have a timely and child-centred transition.	27 December 2024

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: Hampshire County Council

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

Responsible individual: John Stacey

Registered manager: Maddison Taylor

Inspector

Ashley Edwards, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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