

1277304

Registered provider: South West Childcare Services

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The provider states in its statement of purpose that it provides care for up to two children who have social and emotional difficulties.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 10 February 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on our website.

There is an acting manager in post who is not yet registered.

Inspection dates: 21 to 22 April 2021

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: 29 August 2019

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
29/08/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
06/11/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

The staff are not always able to manage the behaviour of the children in their care. One child who was recently admitted to the home has caused extensive damage to the home and to neighbours' property. The manager has asked the child's placing authority to urgently find an alternative home. It is recognised by the manager that the members of the staff team are inexperienced and do not have the skills or knowledge to implement the effective therapeutic parenting approach that the child needs.

The other child living at the home has developed positive and trusting relationships with the staff. He is making progress with independent living skills, education and self-confidence. However, this progress started to slow down after the second child was admitted to the home. The child who has lived there longest is losing confidence and is becoming very anxious due to the frequent incidents that he is witnessing.

The staff do not always ensure that children eat a healthy and balanced diet. One child is being supported to choose healthy ingredients as he learns how to prepare meals and his diet is improving. However, the other child is consistently eating food with a poor nutritional value, as care plans do not guide the staff in how to support and encourage him to eat healthily and this child is consistently choosing to eat only junk food.

Both children are in educational placements that are creatively tailored to meet their educational needs. The staff advocate effectively for the children. For example, one child was supported recently by the manager to change his education provision as he was not making progress.

The children enjoy seeing their families with the support of the staff, who are sensitive to the conflicting feelings that arise for the children after these visits. One member of staff accompanied a child to visit a family member who lives many hundreds of miles away, so that the child could see his family member at Christmastime.

Care plans detail the complex care needs of the children. However, the manager does not ensure that plans are always read by members of staff who do not regularly work in the home, resulting in mixed messages being given to the children. The plans do not contain clear guidance for the staff about safe care and how to maintain clear boundaries when caring for the children.

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

Creative behaviour management strategies are not in place for the staff to follow to manage the behaviour of the child and prevent incidents escalating. The police have been called to the home twice recently by the staff and once by the neighbours. This was because a child was out of the control of the staff and was causing extensive damage to the home and the neighbours' cars and property.

Restraint is rarely used in the home. It is stated in one child's behaviour management plan that he is not to be restrained to manage his behaviour. However, on one occasion, a member of staff from another home was not aware of this guidance and restrained this child, using a hold that is not taught to staff. This caused the child to become violent and anxious.

Both children say that they feel safe living at the home and could name a member of staff that they could speak to if they feel unsafe or worried. Children are aware of how to make a complaint. Recently, the children were not satisfied with the conduct of a new member of staff. They complained to the manager and the member of staff was promptly moved from the home following an investigation. The children were kept informed about the outcome of their complaint.

Safeguarding incidents are promptly reported to the relevant safeguarding professionals. The manager has a positive working relationship with the police, youth offending team and social workers. This joint working helps to ensure the safety of the children. Professionals comment positively about the helpful information and communication that they receive from the home.

Comprehensive recruitment procedures are in place to ensure that only suitable people are employed at the home. Extensive checks and documents are obtained prior to a new member of staff coming to work at the home.

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

The acting manager is suitably qualified and is awaiting the outcome of his application for registration. The staff and placing social workers comment positively about the quality of his leadership, support and communication. He is child-focused and succeeds in creating a homely environment for children.

The home has been extensively damaged by one child. This damage detracts from its previously homely appearance. The manager has responded promptly to ensure that the home is made safe and the damage is repaired, which is currently being carried out.

The staff team is inexperienced. No member of staff holds a level 3 childcare qualification. Two members of staff have alternative childcare qualifications. One member of staff is nearing completion of their qualification and another is enrolled.

Incidents are not always evaluated by the manager to inform a debrief to the staff with the learning from incidents and events. Records of incidents do not show outcomes and ensure that any practice issues that have been identified have been discussed with staff during supervision.

Quality monitoring is undertaken by the provider through regular audits and monthly visits from an independent person, who sets actions for the manager to complete. Information from audits and the monthly visits informs the comprehensive development plan for the home. This plan clearly identifies the home's strengths and areas for improvement and how the manager and the staff will build on the strengths and instigate action to address the areas for improvement.

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 health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child has access to such medical advice, treatment and other services as the child may require. (Regulation 10 (1)(a) 2(c)) This particularly refers to ensuring that children eat a healthy, nutritious diet.	21 May 2021
The registered person must ensure that restraint in relation to a child is necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20 (2)) This particularly refers to ensuring that all staff read a child's behaviour management plan and be aware of individual needs in relation to restraint. In addition, that staff only use accredited holds that they have been trained to use.	21 May 2021
In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (2)(c)) This specifically relates to the manager ensuring that any incidents or events are comprehensively reviewed for any learning or practice issues that need to be followed up with the staff.	21 May 2021
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home.	21 May 2021

The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where necessary, revise it.
(Regulation 35 (1)(a) (2))

This particularly refers to the manager ensuring that the staff are aware of the most effective strategies to de-escalate any incidents and promptly implement these strategies.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home provides a homely and domestic environment and that any damage is promptly repaired and the grouting around the bath is replaced. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: 1277304

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: South West Childcare Services

Registered provider address: Maybrook House, Second Floor, Queensway,
Halesowen, West Midlands B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Guy Mammatt

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Tina Maddison, Social Care Inspector

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