

2531755

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is a privately run children's home. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. The registered manager's position is currently vacant. There is an acting manager in place.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 March 2022

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: 24 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/02/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Some children have experienced remarkable changes to their lives while living at the home. Staff have been pivotal in supporting some children to overcome significant challenges in their lives. Staff are child focused and committed in their care of the children. Children are therefore in a better position to develop their resilience and ability to manage complicated issues affecting their lives.

The staff team has a good track record of supporting children to move on from the home in a gradual and planned way. Staff have supported young people to move on to semi-independent placements at an appropriate point in their lives. Children move on from the home with established support networks and continue to access further education or training courses. This ensures that young people have a solid foundation to flourish as they enter adulthood.

Staff take pride in maintaining a modern and homely environment for the children to live in. The manager ensures that staff quickly address any deterioration of decor in the home. Staff encourage the children to personalise their bedrooms. These efforts from staff help children to have a sense of pride in their home surroundings.

Children living at the home have experienced instability, significant periods of crises and uncertainty. A therapist guides the team to understand the underlying issues that influence children's behaviours. In addition to this, the therapist undertakes individualised sessions with the children at the home. This resource enables children and the staff to have structured and objective support from a qualified practitioner.

Children do well in school. One teacher highlighted to the inspector that the care of the child from staff had undoubtedly had a positive impact on the child's focus in school. Staff's care of the children enables them to focus on their learning. This helps to ensure that children make good progress with their education.

Staff support children to understand their decision-making. The manager uses a child-friendly placement plan to encourage children's input into the care planning process. However, the use of jargon within the written records marginalises children. The manager recognised this and has plans in place to address this shortfall.

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

Staff demonstrate lots of empathy and understanding. This gives children the reassurance they need to feel safe and supported.

Staff develop substantive and meaningful relationships with children. The children enjoy excellent relationships with staff, feel genuinely cared about and listened to, and are confident that any concerns that they have will be addressed. This practice

provides children with a sense of direction in their lives and reassures them that trusted adults are caring for them.

Children rarely go missing from the home. However, when staff have reported some children as missing to the police, staff have not applied the local processes. This has not increased the risk to children, but the manager accepts that the team needs to become aligned with the agreed local protocols.

Experienced staff know the steps that they need to take to uphold the welfare of children. However, there is a lack of clear guidance within the children's individual risk assessments and positive behaviour plans. Therefore, less-experienced staff may not have the capacity to manage risky situations that children are embroiled in.

In the rare occasions that staff restrain children, there is good management oversight of the incident. The manager supports children and staff through a debrief process. This enables children to reflect and recover. The manager's practice also reduces the need for staff to intervene at this level with children.

Newly recruited staff go through a stringent safer recruitment process. Following employment, staff register on the Disclosure and Barring Service which the manager frequently monitors. This reduces the risk of unsuitable staff continuing in their role with children and therefore keeps children safer.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The management of the home is in a period of transition. The vulnerabilities associated with change have been significantly reduced through the support and oversight from the responsible individual, who was formerly the manager of the home. This has enabled much-needed support at a critical time and has bolstered the team's ability to remain consistent in the care of the children.

The management team undertakes thorough planning prior to children moving into the home. In respect of children who move into the home on an emergency basis, the management team consults with the children and professionals. The referral and admission process is robust. This significantly reduces the likelihood of children enduring unnecessary disruption through good matching of children.

The management team is persistent in its challenge to local authorities regarding care planning when this has been required. This has been undertaken in a respectful manner and has enabled progress to be achieved in the children's care planning. This practice ensures that collaborative working remains effective, thus achieving good progress for children.

The manager has established effective working relationships with all significant people who are involved in the children's lives. Parents, teachers, members of virtual schools and social workers were positive about the communication received from the manager. The manager ensures that the home does not work in isolation and is good at sharing relevant information about the children. This ensures that children

are supported outside of the home and promotes a cohesive support network for the children.

Staff receive frequent supervision from their manager. Staff feel well supported by their manager and say that their supervisions are productive. The manager's practice has created a harmonious staff team that has established a common objective in the care of the children. This ensures that the children experience consistency of care from staff.

Staff receive an annual appraisal of their performance. However, the responsible individual could not access various staff appraisals at the time of the inspection. The manager will, therefore, lose the capacity to monitor and evaluate agreed objectives that were set in the staff's previous annual appraisal. This could stifle staff accountability and development.

The benefit of the independent visitor role is not fully maximised by the management team. There has been a consistent failure by the independent visitor to seek independent feedback from the children's parents. This reduces the transparency of the setting and misses opportunities for the children's parents to raise their views and concerns with an independent person.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person must ensure that the home's procedures consider the views of appropriate local services, and have regard to police and local authority protocols for responding to missing persons incidents in the area where the home is located. This specifically refers to the implementation of the Philomena Protocol. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.29)
- The registered person must ensure that all staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. This appraisal should consider, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and children in the home's care. As part of the performance management process, poor performance should be addressed by a timely plan to bring about improvement. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)
- The registered person should ensure that the independent person they appoint has the skills and understanding necessary to: assess all relevant information; and form an impartial judgement about the quality of the home's care. In particular, that the registered person should consult the children's parents as part of the visit. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.8)

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: 2531755

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Ltd

Registered provider address: Sandcastle Care Ltd, 49 Whitegate Drive, Blackpool
FY3 9DG

Responsible individual: Andrew Hobson

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Steve Guirey, Social Care Inspector

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