

2561501

Registered provider: Smartcare Services

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home provides care for up to four children who may experience social and/or emotional difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted in April 2020. The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2021.

There were two children living in the home at the time of this inspection. The inspectors spoke to both children.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 July 2023

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: 20 April 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/04/2022	Full	Good
18/05/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

A dedicated staff team prioritises building positive relationships with children. Children receive child-centred care. Staff show care, empathy and warmth towards children. When asked what they like best about the home, one child said 'staff'. Staff and children appreciate the family-style atmosphere of the home. When asked what they are doing well, one member of staff said, 'Creating a family atmosphere for staff and children; everyone feels like they belong.'

Children can express their views about their day-to-day care through key-work sessions and house meetings. Children know how to make a complaint, and action is taken to address their complaints. Subsequently, children feel listened to.

The manager and staff promote children's education well. Children are encouraged and supported to attend school, and their educational achievements are rewarded. Subsequently, one child was able to re-engage in education after a long period of absence. When children are not attending school, the manager and staff identify the most appropriate provision to meet the children's needs in line with children's wishes. For example, staff are supporting one child to find a vocational course in their chosen field of work.

Children's health needs are met well. Staff support children to attend medical appointments and ensure that they have access to specialist advice when necessary. Staff ensure that children take their medication as prescribed.

Children are provided with opportunities to participate in a range of activities in the home and the community. Staff and managers understand that this helps to build children's self-esteem and sense of achievement. Staff capture these moments through taking photos and videos for children to keep as part of their life story.

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

Children say that they feel safe. They can identify a trusted person to talk to if they have any concerns.

Children receive a coordinated response when they go missing from home. Each child has their own missing-from-home protocol, which is known and understood by staff. The manager and staff work closely with other professionals when children are missing from home. Staff consult with children following missing-from-home incidents to build an understanding of the triggers and work towards preventing further incidents. As a result, missing-from-home incidents have decreased for some children.

Staff have a clear understanding of children's known and potential risks. Children benefit from regular key-work sessions that are either targeted to their known risks

or are more informal sessions to help children build resilience, develop coping strategies and manage difficult life events. Key-work sessions are written in a child-friendly way so that children have a record of their experiences in the home.

Staff demonstrate a strong understanding of whistle-blowing policies and safeguarding procedures. When an allegation was made, it was shared with the safeguarding partners and followed up by the manager. However, Ofsted was not informed of this allegation as required.

Staff manage incidents well and use effective de-escalation techniques to support children. This means that even children with the most significant needs have positive experiences. There have been no incidents requiring the use of physical intervention since the last inspection.

Children's safety and well-being are prioritised. Leaders and managers implement safe recruitment policies when appointing new staff.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed effectively and efficiently by an experienced registered manager who demonstrates a genuine commitment to the children in her care. Leaders, managers and staff strive to make a positive difference to children's lives and strongly advocate on their behalf.

Agency staff are used to supplement the permanent staff team. Leaders and managers work with agencies to ensure that known agency staff are used to provide consistency for children.

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the home's strengths and areas for improvement. A more-reliable and user-friendly recording system is one of the areas that leaders and managers are focusing on.

Staff report that they feel well supported by leaders and managers, who are available and approachable. Staff receive regular and effective supervision, which considers and prioritises children's needs. All permanent staff have received their annual appraisal. However, appraisals could be strengthened by including the views of children and professionals who have worked with staff.

Staff have access to regular training that is relevant to the needs of the children in their care. Furthermore, team meetings are used effectively as learning and development opportunities for staff.

Leaders and managers have failed to share the updated statement of purpose and their quality of care review report with Ofsted, as required. This compromises the regulator's external oversight of the home. However, the registered manager shared the documents with the inspector during this inspection.

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 registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. The registered person must provide a copy of the statement of purpose to HMCI and make a copy of it available upon request to— - a person who works at the home; - a child, or a child for whom accommodation in the home is being considered; - a parent of a child, or a parent of a child for whom accommodation in the home is being considered; - a child's placing authority; and - in the case of a qualifying school, the Secretary of State. (Regulation 16 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e))	28 July 2023
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c))	28 July 2023
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and	28 July 2023

make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home. (Regulation 45 (1) (4)(a)(b))	
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Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff appraisals take into account, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and of children in the home's care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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: 2561501

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Smartcare Services

Registered provider address: 10 Watermark Way, Foxholes Business Park,
Hertford, Hertfordshire SG13 7TZ

Responsible individual: Neville Henry

Registered manager: Natalie Power

Inspectors

Aneta Wasilewska, Social Care Inspector
Julie Cresswell, Social Care Inspector

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