

2582246

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private company owns this home, which provides care for two children. The provider states in its statement of purpose that it provides care for two children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The registered manager has been registered with Ofsted since March 2020.

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.

A monitoring visit was undertaken in February 2021. There were no serious or widespread failures identified. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 1 to 2 September 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: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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Not previously inspected		
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Inspection judgements

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

This is the first full inspection since the home opened in March 2020. Prior to the visit, a complaint was received about the operation of the setting and the staffing complement. This was considered as part of the inspection activity.

There is currently one child living in the home. Another child has recently moved out. One child who had been settled in the home for a long time had recently become unsettled, and there was an increase in missing-from-home incidents. This was a safeguarding concern. A lack of staff, due to COVID-19 restrictions, had an impact on the ability of the team to keep the child safe. The disruption also caused distress to another child during this time frame. This had an impact on the overall experiences and progress of both children living at the home at that time.

The importance of education is promoted in the home. Children are supported to complete their homework, and receive incentives for their efforts in attending and engaging in school. However, for one child, educational outcomes did start to deteriorate in May 2021. This was because her attendance at school had fallen.

Children are supported to maintain their health and lead healthy lifestyles. Staff take children to attend planned health appointments. When appointments have been cancelled during the COVID-19 pandemic, staff have ensured that appropriate medical advice is taken, and appointments rearranged.

Behaviour management focuses on de-escalation, and incidents are generally managed well. Children benefit from access to a therapist who works with the children and staff to support therapeutic approaches. Additionally, direct work with the children is meaningful and purposeful. The staff help children to reflect, understand and learn. For example, the staff supported a child to understand the importance of not hurting others. As a result, the child's behaviour has improved.

Staff celebrate the children's achievements and birthdays. This is a strength of the home. The child is also learning to appreciate diversity through the use of pictures and reading storybooks with staff. Mealtimes are social occasions where the child enjoys nutritious, home-cooked meals.

The child who is currently living in the house has positive relationships with staff. The child has recently enjoyed a holiday and takes part in a wide variety of activities in and out of the home. She is due to start swimming lessons and trampoline club in the coming weeks. These activities keep the child active and healthy.

Children are supported to make informed choices about their lives. This gives the children a sense of belonging. Children have the opportunity to attend the staff team meeting. Staff had supported one child when she chose to attend the meeting. The

child said, 'I like all the staff, they are nice', and rated the home nine out of 10. Feedback from professionals is positive. One social worker said, 'The home has a family feel and there are good boundaries and structures in place.'

There has been some recent redecoration of the home. However, some areas of the home still require attention. Not all living areas are being maintained to an acceptable standard of cleanliness, such as the hallway and internal doors. The child's bedroom and lounge also require painting and the wallpaper needs to be replaced. The manager has a programme of work in place to address these issues.

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

Not all children are kept consistently safe. Improvements are required in safeguarding practices to ensure that there are clear strategies in place to keep children safe who are experiencing difficulties in their lives.

The judgement for this outcome area largely reflects a period of four weeks when one child was not adequately safeguarded. Following a period of crisis, a child who had lived at the home for over 12 months was moved to a new home, because a decision was made that the staff were unable to meet her needs.

One child was the subject of a court-directed order. This order required two staff to be in place to keep the child safe. However, the agreed staffing levels could not be sustained. The manager reported that this was due to COVID-19. During this time, a child started to go missing from home and was found to be at risk in the community. Furthermore, the home was staffed by agency workers who were not all trained in physical intervention. Therefore, they could not adhere to the court-directed order that enabled them to prevent the child from leaving the home and placing herself at risk in the community.

When some children go missing from home, there are not sufficient regular staff to safely support the children. As a result, incidents in the home for some children have increased. Some children have become distressed in times of crisis because they have not been provided with support from adults who know them well and understand their needs. In one incident, there was a physical intervention because the child became so distressed.

When some children are at risk of exploitation, the risks are not consistently recorded in risk management plans. Consequently, there were no agreed written strategies or guidance for staff to follow to help keep a child safe. Despite shortfalls in risk management strategies being identified at the previous monitoring visit, this has not been rectified and further work is required.

When some children have returned to the home under the influence of unknown substances, staff have not consistently sought medical advice. There is no rationale or risk management strategy to indicate why staff should not seek medical advice. The manager reported that staff do conduct physical checks of the child. However,

not all staff are trained in responding to substance misuse and there are no records available to show how often checks have been completed and who did them.

Recruitment procedures and practices are safe and effective. All staff are checked and vetted prior to starting work. These checks ensure that only suitable adults are employed to work with children in the home.

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

The home is led by an experienced and suitably qualified manager who has been registered for several years. She demonstrates a child-centred approach and is very passionate about her role. Staff say the manager is supportive and approachable.

During the period when the home was unsettled, leaders and managers failed to ensure that children were provided with the level of support they needed, in line with the court-directed order. When the decision was taken to reduce staffing in the home, the registered manager failed to robustly assess the impact of this decision, and this led to poor outcomes and disruption for children in the home.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that all staff are suitably skilled or trained to meet the needs of children. For example, not all staff have received training in relation to substance misuse, despite this being a known risk, and some staff do not have an up-to-date first-aid qualification. This does not demonstrate that all staff have the skills and training required to safely support the children.

There have been several changes to the staff working in the home because the provider has made the decision to move staff to other homes in the organisation. This has had an impact on the children's ability to establish and build positive long-term relationships with the adults who are caring for them. However, the team is now stable, and the inspector observed good interaction between the child, the manager, and the staff.

Staff benefit from structured, thorough induction processes, and receive regular supervision. This provides staff with the opportunity to reflect on and improve their practice. Team meetings are regular and well attended by the staff team. The content covers a range of topics and is relevant to the children's needs.

The registered manager has a system in place for internal and external monitoring. She regularly consults with the children, their families and other stakeholders, and takes their views into account when making changes.

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 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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(vi)(b)(d))	17 October 2021
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;	17 October 2021

ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; 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. (Regulation 13 (2)(c)(d)(e)(f))	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (a)(2)(c))	17 October 2021

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: 2582246

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

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

Responsible individual: Penelope Rafferty

Registered manager: Susan Towers

Inspector

Judith Birchall, Social Care Inspector

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