2595021

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home registered with Ofsted in July 2020 and is operated by a private company. It provides care for up to two children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, one child was living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2023.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 October 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	**requires improvement to be good**
How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good

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: 11 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/02/2025	Full	Good
30/01/2024	Full	Good
14/03/2023	Full	Good
09/11/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

As part of the inspection, the inspector spoke with the child living at the home.

Since the last inspection, one child has continued to live at the home. Another child moved into the home but moved out soon after. The responsible individual and registered manager gave the placing authority notice for the child to leave due to a significant increase in safeguarding concerns and not being able to meet their needs.

The child made very limited progress during their time at the home. They were helped to create a CV, give it to a potential employer and attend a careers event. However, the child was not in employment, education or training during their time living at the home. Opportunities for informal learning and the development of independence skills were limited, as the child was frequently absent from home.

The child currently living at the home is making steady progress in education and developing their independence skills. They completed their exams in the summer and have now left school. Staff are supporting them with one-to-one tuition until a suitable college course is identified. This demonstrates that the child is helped to reach their academic potential and pursue their future aspirations.

On one occasion, a child suffered a significant injury when missing from the home and left the hospital without receiving appropriate treatment and observation. Staff reported the child missing from home to the police appropriately. However, when staff located the child, they advised them to return to hospital, but they declined. Staff did not seek advice and support from relevant healthcare professionals, arrange follow-up appointments or ensure that the child received the medical attention required. This left the child with a significant untreated injury. In contrast, generally, children's health needs are recognised, understood and met. Staff encourage the child living at the home to attend routine health appointments.

Staff understand children's family dynamics and assist the child living at the home in maintaining regular contact with their family. A social worker complimented the staff on their commitment to help the child overcome difficulties in their relationship with a family member. This helps the child stay in touch with people who are important and develop their sense of belonging and identity.

The home is decorated and furnished to a good standard. The child likes their home and takes pride in it. The child says they like the staff and can talk to them about any concerns. Consequently, the child lives in a happy and relaxed home where staff treat them with dignity and respect.

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

Safeguarding practice at the home does not ensure that children are safeguarded effectively. The registered manager does not fully consider the risks and vulnerabilities of children moving into the home against the risks associated with the location of the home. As a result, one child was frequently missing and absent from home for extended periods. Furthermore, the review of premises report does not include sufficient risk reduction strategies to help staff manage the risks to children who are vulnerable to criminal exploitation or at risk of going missing from home.

When safeguarding concerns arose for one child, staff followed the child's individual care and risk management plans. However, this was ineffective. The manager failed to contact the child's placing authority promptly to request a review of the relevant care and risk management plans when the child was persistently absent from home without permission, raising serious concerns for their welfare. This meant that the child was left vulnerable to criminal exploitation and substance misuse, and they sustained a significant injury when absent from the home.

Staff are trained on various topics, including safeguarding, fire safety and physical intervention. However, not all staff have received training on child exploitation, knife crime or substance misuse. This is a missed opportunity for staff to develop their knowledge and skills to enable them to support the specific needs of the children they care for.

Staff regularly speak to children in a sensitive manner about a range of topics, including risks, risk-taking and vulnerabilities. This helps children recognise and understand unsafe and inappropriate situations, and it supports them in managing their thoughts and feelings and regulating their emotions in a more positive manner.

On one occasion, when staff gave a child a fair and proportionate consequence, it was not recorded or fully conducted in line with the relevant regulation. A debrief did not take place with the member of staff who implemented the consequence. This was a missed opportunity for the member of staff and the manager to reflect on the consequence.

Two neighbours have lodged three complaints regarding the consequences of staff and visitors parking outside the home. The complaints were addressed in line with the organisation's complaints policy and at the lowest level. As a result, this issue has now been resolved.

Staff are safely recruited to work at the home. The registered manager ensures that the necessary checks are carried out before staff start working with children. This helps ensure that the adults working with children are safe to do so.

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

The registered manager is suitably experienced and qualified to manage the home. He knows the child well, speaks of them in high regard and shares aspirations for their future.

The manager is responsible for managing two homes, meaning his time is divided between them. One member of staff feels that having the manager's presence more in the home would increase the support provided to staff. However, overall, staff say they feel supported by the manager.

An established and stable staff team works at the home. Any gaps in the rota are covered by the team. This creates consistency of care for the child. Most of the staff are studying for their childcare qualification; however, one member of staff has missed the deadline for completion. This was raised as a requirement at the last inspection and has been restated. The member of staff is now on track to complete their qualification in the coming months.

New staff receive a thorough induction to the organisation, their role and home. They receive a good programme of support and mandatory training to help them understand their roles and continue to develop professionally.

Staff receive regular supervision in line with the statement of purpose. However, not all supervision notes demonstrate that consideration is given to the significant safeguarding concerns for children. This does not enable staff to fully reflect on their practice and safeguarding concerns.

Leaders and managers have reviewing and monitoring systems in place to assess the effectiveness of the care provided by staff. However, these systems are not as effective as intended.

This inspection identified several shortfalls in care planning, safeguarding and the lack of key local authority documents available to staff for guidance. These shortfalls could potentially have been avoided if reviewing and monitoring systems were more robust and effective.

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; 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 are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; 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 located so that children are effectively safeguarded. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(vi)(vii)(b)(c))	7 December 2025
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.	7 December 2025

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— 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; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(f)(g)(h))	
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 children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose; that arrangements are in place to— manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and that the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plans is requested, if—	7 December 2025

the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child's needs; the child is, or has been, persistently absent from the home without permission. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(ii)(e)(i)(ii)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that they raise concerns about children's safety and welfare in a timely manner and only admit children to the home whose needs they can meet.	
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b))	7 December 2025
For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b)) This requirement is restated.	7 December 2025

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that any consequences used to address poor behaviour are conducted and recorded in line with regulation 35. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 46, paragraph 9.38)

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: 2595021

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

Registered provider address: 2 Barton Close, Grove Park, Enderby, Leicester LE19 1SJ

Responsible individual: Grace Cookson

Registered manager: David Hunter

Inspector

Julie Elder, Social Care Inspector

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