

2626773

Registered provider: Hertfordshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides care for up to three children. The children may have a range of needs which include significant trauma, mental health needs, risk of exploitation and significant attachment issues, and may present with challenging behaviour.

The home consists of three flats that provide accommodation for three solo placements.

The manager registered with Ofsted in February 2021.

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.

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 July 2021

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: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This is the first full inspection since the home registered in February 2021. The aim of the home is to meet the highly complex needs of children who cannot be placed in mainstream residential care.

Since registration, two children have moved into the home. The children were fully involved in all aspects of planning their moves. Staff spent time visiting the children and talking with them prior to their moves into the home. This gave the children knowledge about the home and made them feel welcome.

Children are fully included in the decoration of their individual flats and contribute to the choice of colour schemes. Positive messages, photographs and books help the children to feel wanted and at home. The children choose their own resources and fully express their individuality. The garden areas enable them to enjoy the trampoline and play basketball. This fully reflects children's particular likes and preferences, giving children a sense of belonging.

Children are making good progress in education from their starting points. They have bespoke education packages to meet their specific needs. Staff support the children to develop self-directed study skills and build independence as they work towards a full-time school timetable.

The relationships between staff and children start before the children move into the home. At the home, staff ensure that the children have structure and routine to the day. The staff spend quality time with the children and have fun. Interactions between staff and children provide children with a range of positive experiences.

Children are supported to improve their family relationships. Staff help children to have meaningful contact with their families, which can include family members staying at the home overnight.

Children's emotional well-being has improved. Staff and the manager work closely with health professionals. Collaborative working provides the staff with a good understanding of the children's health needs. This understanding helps the children to express their emotions safely.

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

Children feel safe because the staff provide them with a stable and safe home. The children can identify staff they can speak to if they have any worries. When children raise concerns regarding staff's practice, the manager takes action to safeguard the children.

Children's risky behaviour has decreased. Children who previously went missing from home and were at risk of exploitation and self-harm are safer. This is due to the high levels of staff supervision and the good relationships that the children have with the staff. The staff give children consistent positive responses and clear routines and boundaries.

Staff use a therapeutic framework to support children to manage their emotions. Staff know the children well and listen to their views. The staff respond effectively and sensitively to behavioural incidents. Children have specific achievable targets that help to promote their confidence and self-esteem.

Staff use physical interventions appropriately and rarely use sanctions. The staff focus on positive reinforcement and restorative practice. They offer the children incentives to help them to change their behaviours and to encourage them to make positive choices. These incentives include having pets. Children respond well to this and have developed positive strategies to manage their feelings.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is qualified and has extensive experience. He has high aspirations for the children and adopts a child-centred approach. This achieves good outcomes for children and enables them to have positive experiences.

The staff speak highly of the manager and the organisation. Staff are very well supported by the manager. As a result, the staff are flexible, willing and enthusiastic. The manager has designed the rota to meet the children's needs. The manager recognises the intensity of the work required from the staff. Each child has a designated staff team. This means that children receive care from a consistent and competent staff team.

Staff record daily positivity notes and keep memorabilia for the children. The children take these with them when they leave the home, providing them with thoughtful childhood memories. The children's daily records provide the children and professionals with information about the child's day. However, some of the records are written emotively. This is not in keeping with the ethos of the home and is not helpful to children who may read their records.

The manager works effectively with the children's professionals. The staff and the manager implement agreed and planned strategies to reduce risk taking and enable the children to progress.

Staff receive training that enables them to care for children in line with the home's statement of purpose. Following significant incidents, staff can access a therapist to discuss their emotions. However, there is a lack of clinical support for staff to discuss the emotional impact of their daily work with children.

Internal monitoring requires improvement. The managerial monitoring has not identified some shortfalls in the staff's practice. For example, the manager has not

raised questions when some records lack full details about the actions that the staff have taken following an incident. This shortfall in monitoring does not ensure that the staff are consistently working in line with the children's plans.

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 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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— 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 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)) In particular: ensure that records fully evidence the action taken to support the child; ensure that records distinguish between fact and opinion and are not written emotively.	27 August 2021

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff are provided with supervision to reflect and act on how their own feelings and behaviour may be affected by the behaviour of the children they care for. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.15)

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: 2626773

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hertfordshire County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford SG13 8DQ

Responsible individual: Marion Ingram

Registered manager: Christopher Davis

Inspector

Natalie Burton, Social Care Inspector

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