

2632092

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately operated home provides care and support for up to two children with emotional and/or social difficulties. The home opened on 19 April 2021.

The registered manager has been in post since 22 February 2022. This was the home's second full inspection since opening.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 January 2023

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: 25 January 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/01/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Children's experiences of living at this home are variable. One child's complex emotional needs were well met. The manager showed resilience in working alongside the child to secure positive outcomes for them. However, another child experienced significant instability while living at this home because staff were unable to meet their identified needs. This means that the quality of care children receive is not consistent.

When decisions are being made about which children should move into the home, the manager does not fully consider all of the available information. For example, one child's identified needs and risks were not fully explored. This meant that staff were not equipped with the information they needed to care for the child. Consequently, the child experienced an unplanned move.

The home blends in well in the community and is externally well maintained. However, the internal environment lacks a homely feel. Repairs take too long, and damage to the home is not repaired to a good enough standard. The manager has escalated their concerns, but this has not effected change. The inspector noted that one child's bedroom has significant damage to the walls. This does not encourage the child to take pride in their environment.

The staff help and encourage children to take part in leisure activities and hobbies that promote social engagement. For example, they go to watch football matches, go karting and attend youth groups. These experiences help to develop children's self-esteem.

Children are supported well to develop the skills they need to be independent. Work completed with children preparing for adulthood is holistic and considers practical skills such as cooking as well as emotional health and relationships. One child was supported successfully by staff to move into their own accommodation.

Staff understand and promote children's cultural and identity needs. One child is supported to attend their place of worship on a regular basis, alongside extended family. This helps children to develop a positive sense of self.

Children are helped to understand their history and rebuild relationships with those who are important to them. For one child, the work completed with their wider family meant that once the child moved out, they had access to a support network within their local community. Family connections are strengthened because of this work. This reduces the risk of children becoming isolated.

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

Staff have been unable to consistently maintain the home as a place of safety for all children. Decisions about which children should live at the home do not consider all the known risks for each child. This resulted in one child moving out of the home in order to reduce the risk of them being harmed. This decision was undertaken in consultation with the child's social worker, in recognition of staff struggling to keep the child safe.

Staff do not always recognise significant risks to children and take appropriate action. Staff did not immediately call the police when they observed one child entering a vehicle with unknown people. This child was left at risk of exploitation. Another child was left at risk of self-harm because sharp items were not removed from their bedroom. This is not safe and effective practice.

When children are missing from home, staff take positive action to ensure the child's safe return home, including actively searching for children and working together with children's parents and the police. Children are not being routinely offered independent return home interviews. This means that opportunities to better understand how to help children who go missing are lost.

Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and communicate this to them through individual conversations and children's meetings. There are clear boundaries in place, and children benefit from consistent structure and routine. When issues do arise, staff talk to children and take their views on board. Children know what is expected of them.

Staff understand individual children's behaviours well, and this helps them to de-escalate situations. Physical intervention is used only as a last resort. Records of physical intervention do not consistently contain key information, such as the length of time children are held. This means that the manager cannot be sure that staff are practising safe holds in line with the home's procedures.

There have been no allegations against staff since the last inspection. Both new and experienced staff spoken to during the inspection were clear about what procedures they needed to follow. Staff understand how to keep children safe when allegations are made.

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

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced. He has continued his professional development by completing a level 5 qualification. He is child-focused. Staff are led by his example. Decisions are made day to day that are child-centred.

The manager was already aware of most of the shortfalls raised in this inspection. The manager has accepted the issues raised and has started to put plans in place to

address them. That said, two requirements and one recommendation from the home's previous inspection have not been fully met. This is not improving the quality of children's experiences living at this home.

Systems for monitoring practice are in place. However, these have not been effective. Children's records are not always kept up to date. Some records, such as the work completed with children following consequences being given, are missing. The quality of management evaluation is inconsistent. This is not helping the manager to understand children's progress or improve practice.

Supervision is regular. Additional discussions take place with staff where needed. Staff are confident to raise concerns about other staff's practice, and the manager takes appropriate action. Supervision is helping to improve practice.

Staff receive regular training on a variety of topics. The staff spoken to are positive about the quality of training that is provided. Training is now happening face to face as well as online. When the manager identifies that refresher training is required, for example on child exploitation, it does not always happen quickly enough. This creates delay in staff understanding how to better care for children.

Staff are positive about coming to work and feel well supported by the manager. They have pulled together and shown commitment to their roles during staffing shortages. This has included them working extra hours and being more flexible. This provides children with stability.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; and use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— protect and promote each child's welfare; and provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(ii)(vii)) In particular, the manager must ensure that repairs are completed to a good standard in a timely manner to ensure that the home maintains a domestic, family feel.	31 March 2023
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;	31 March 2023

have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; and take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare.] (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)((iii)(v)(vi)) In particular, the manager must ensure that staff can recognise risk to children from exploitation and take immediate steps to safeguard them. The manager must ensure that when children are coming to live at the home, the known risks are understood and measures put in place to mitigate these. The manager must ensure that when children have been missing from home, the relevant local authority makes provision for an independent return home interview.	
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 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)(d)) In particular, the manager must ensure that broken items of furniture in children's bedrooms are removed and replaced. In one child's bedroom, the television aerial socket should be replaced, and the electrical sockets should be made tamper-proof.	31 March 203
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.	31 March 2023

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, the manager must ensure that when reviewing the quality of care provided to children, they consider if previous actions have been completed and what impact this has had on individual children’s experiences and progress.	
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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) In particular, the manager must ensure that the systems in place for monitoring and reviewing the care provided in the home are effective.	31 March 2023
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration;	31 March 2023

details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(b))	31 March 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that once a staff training need has been identified, this training is undertaken without delay. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43 paragraph 9.12)

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: 2632092

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: Daniel Dearlove

Inspector

Rachel Walker, Social Care Inspector

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