

2634720

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is one of a number operated by a large private organisation. The provider states in the home's statement of purpose that they provide care for up to two children with social and emotional difficulties.

The children were spoken to during the inspection.

This was the first visit to this setting. The home was registered in June 2021.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection date: 11 January 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

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

Recent inspection history

Not previously inspected

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of the inspection, two children were living at the home. Children speak highly of their home and the care that they receive. One child said: 'I never want to leave. Everyone really cares about me and helps me when I need it.' This means that children who live in the home have developed a sense of belonging and trust the adults who care for them.

Education is central to the culture in the home. As a result, children make progress in their education. One child was not happy at their educational provision and action was taken quickly to ensure that the child was listened to and changes were made to his education plan. The child told inspectors that they are much happier in the new provision.

Staff are not aware of the local offer setting out the support available for children with special educational needs or disabilities. This is a missed opportunity to access a range of specialist resources for children with additional needs. It also limits the opportunities to inform children's plans using external resources and expertise.

Children have the opportunity to engage in various activities that promote their hobbies and interests. They are supported by staff to talk about issues in their lives and work on solutions to help them overcome any hurdles. Staff provide consistent care and have remained committed despite the difficulties that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought.

Children's health and well-being is promoted by staff. Staff ensure that healthcare plans identify children's individual health needs. Statutory health assessments have been completed and children are supported to attend required medical appointments. However, one child is not yet receiving the recommended emotional well-being intervention and a health appointment missed prior to the child moving into the home had not been rearranged at the time of the inspection.

Children are supported to spend time with people who are important to them. This has had a significant impact for one child, who is now developing good relationships with family members. Life-story work has not been started with children to help them understand their roots and develop their own identity.

The home and garden are not always maintained to a good standard. The inspectors found that the garden area needed attention as it was not a clean environment. In the home, one child's bedroom door handle needed repairing. The downstairs bathroom door was damaged and the children's games room door handle was also broken. This creates health and safety issues within the home and an environment that lacks a homely feel. Leaders and managers need to ensure that the maintenance of the home is promoted and that when damage is caused it is repaired without delay.

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

Children are safe and well cared for. All staff are aware of the risks in children's lives and how to manage them. Individual risk assessments are followed by staff and strategies are effective in ensuring that children are safe. Children know that the staff will listen to them and help them to resolve any issues. Not all children's plans ensure that emotional well-being risks and strategies are captured, to include clear direction to staff when dealing with incidents when children are struggling emotionally.

Staff are trained in de-escalation techniques and the interventions are effective in preventing incidents from escalating. Incident reports are appropriately detailed and physical intervention is only used as a last resort to keep children safe. Debriefs take place with all children and staff involved in incidents within statutory timescales. Staff communicate well with other agencies and share information when necessary to ensure children are safeguarded.

Staff respond proactively when children go missing from their home. Staff work closely with other agencies and family members to locate children and ensure that they are safe. Staff support children to understand risks in their lives and help them to develop strategies to keep themselves safe. This helps children to make good decisions, form trusting relationships with staff and manage risks in their lives.

Before a child moves into the home, the assessment process to ensure that their needs can be met is not robust enough. The assessment does not always consider if staff have the skills to meet the child's needs, the location of the home, the compatibility of children already living at the home or the timing of a child moving into the home. One child moved into the home on the same day as another child was leaving. This lack of clear risk identification and matching could be detrimental to children living in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2021 when the home opened. He displays strong leadership skills, alongside the responsible individual. Staff told inspectors the management team is supportive and readily available.

At the time of the inspection, the registered manager was absent. The responsible individual had taken on the role of supporting the staff team and overseeing the running of the home alongside an experienced manager within the company. This has ensured that the quality of care to the children remains consistent while the manager is off work.

Managers and staff have an in-depth understanding of the needs of children in their care. Staff are child-centred and aspirational in their approach. The manager and staff team are passionate and encourage children to make progress and achieve positive outcomes. This means that children have adults who champion them and help them to achieve their full potential.

Children are cared for by adults who know them well and there are enough adults in the home to meet the children's needs. There have been very few changes to the staff team, which means that children have the opportunity to develop secure relationships.

Staff receive a comprehensive induction programme, with regular reviews of their progress. Staff also receive supervision sessions that develop their practice and ensure that children are receiving high-quality care. Staff are trained to meet the children's needs. They have engaged in a wide range of training that supports them to develop their knowledge of current issues affecting children in society. Staff spoke highly about recent training the provider had commissioned regarding knife crime, which all staff found valuable. This has enabled staff to educate and empower children through developing their knowledge.

The team comes together regularly in team meetings to discuss current plans and goals for children. The manager provides clear direction to the staff team and has high aspirations. The internal therapist develops plans for children, however, her expertise is not being used to support staff to therapeutically care for children who have experienced trauma. This means that children are not yet benefiting from highly effective partnership working.

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; 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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii) This specifically relates to maintenance being completed in the home in a timely manner and all areas of the children's home being personalised.	28 February 2022
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 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(b)) This relates specifically to ensuring children's safety plans include all strategies to support children when they are emotionally struggling. It also relates to analysing when	28 February 2022

external health input is required following a significant incident.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)) This specifically relates to the children having a plan that is underpinned by multi-agency assessments/plans. Plans should include specific and measurable goals that everyone is working towards to support the children to reach their potential. It relates to ensuring that there is no delay for children when they need to access external support services as part of their plan. It relates to children being supported to understand their identity and life story. It finally relates to the assessment should decide before the child moves in, if the provider can meet the child’s needs, considering all children’s needs, the skills of the adults caring for children and the location of the home.	28 February 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when the placing authority or another relevant person does not provide the input and services needed to meet a child’s needs during their time in the home or in preparation for leaving the home, the home must challenge them to meet the child’s needs (see regulations 5(c)). Staff should act as champions for their children, expecting nothing less than a good parent would. The registered person should consider the use of an independent advocate (see paragraph 4.16) if the child’s needs are not being met. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations, including the quality standards’, page 12, paragraph 2.8)
- The registered person and staff need to have an understanding that a high proportion of children in children’s homes have special educational needs and require specialist support to be able to engage positively and achieve in education. They must be aware of the details in the education, health and social care plan for a child who has special educational needs or a disability. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations, including the quality standards’, page 26, paragraph 5.4)

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: 2634720

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

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

Responsible individual: David Crow

Registered manager: Gavin Holmes

Inspectors

Jessica Higginson, Social Care Inspector
Carly Quinn, Social Care Inspector

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