

2644283

Registered provider: Rocksteady Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children, aged from eight to 14 years, who experience social and emotional difficulties. There were two children living in the home at the time of this inspection.

This is the first inspection of the home since it was registered with Ofsted in February 2023.

Inspection dates: 30 and 31 August 2023

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
Not previously inspected		

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress because they receive sincere and comforting care from staff who recognise their strengths, vulnerabilities and individual needs. Staff are curious about the experiences and cultural heritage of the children they care for.

There is thorough preparation and planning before children move into the home. Children are invited to visit before they move in, and they can discuss any concerns or requests that they have. Risks are explored thoroughly and are discussed with the child's professional and family networks. Staff receive training specific to children's needs so that they can provide appropriate support, and there is recognition of how children moving in can affect the overall dynamics of the home.

Children are involved in decisions about their care. They attend regular house meetings, know how to complain and are familiar with advocacy and independent visitors. They are encouraged to design their bedrooms to their own taste, and their space is respected by staff.

Children are taught the importance of taking ownership of their decisions. One child was interested in having pets, so they were tasked by the registered manager to undertake research about the costs and responsibilities of this. The child did research about keeping rabbits and beekeeping, but finally settled on ownership of a Venus flytrap.

Children have access to a variety of activities, including karate, ice-skating and swimming. They also enjoy home-based entertainment, such as playing computer games, playing with water guns, basketball games, playing musical instruments and riding bicycles. Their family contact and social engagements with friends are promoted. At the time of the inspection, the children were on holiday at a coastal resort.

Staff carefully support children to understand the choices they make and the possible outcomes and consequences that might arise. This teaches children to learn how to be accountable and take responsibility for their actions.

Staff spoke about children warmly and described the home as a 'calm environment'. One child arrived with a history of aggressive behaviour towards adults. The staff have used a trauma-informed approach to help the child manage their feelings and the frequency of incidents has steadily reduced.

Children are supported to learn important life skills to improve their independence. Incentive charts are used to reward children for their efforts and help with recognition of achievement. One child is being encouraged to participate in more domestic tasks, while another is learning about budgeting and cooking.

Education is prioritised and children's learning needs are understood. Creative solutions have been employed to make learning accessible for one child after a period of time out of formal education settings. The registered manager advocated on behalf of another child to ensure that a mainstream school placement was identified in a timely way.

Children's health and well-being are promoted. External professionals spoke positively about one child's attendance at health appointments improving due to support from staff.

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

Risk assessments are comprehensive and reviewed regularly. Key-work sessions are planned according to children's individual needs. Conversations are focused on addressing specific known and arising risks, such as online safety and social media use. Staff approach this work sensitively and with respect for children's feelings.

Trust is integral to risk management and safety in the home. Staff provide thoughtful support to children who self-harm. Staff have good knowledge of individual triggers for self-harm and have specific plans for monitoring whether children are in possession of items that they may use for this purpose. Children consent to these plans and often use the opportunity to discuss their worries with trusted staff.

Children's meetings are regular and have become increasingly well attended. Discussions consider food choices and activities, but also 'joys and dreads'. The registered manager has also introduced a 'grumbles' book as another outlet for children to have their say. Children know how to make requests and are confident to speak about their wishes. One child said, 'Not really anything could be better. I have to talk so people know what I want.'

There is a clear protocol in place for managing allegations against staff. While no allegations have been made, staff can confidently describe the appropriate procedure. Staff are also confident in the role of leaders in supporting them with whistle-blowing, should the need arise. There is a culture of transparency promoted in the home, and staff are confident in both challenging and praising each other's practice.

Staff are safely recruited to ensure that children have carers who are professional and skilful. Recruitment checks are usually thorough and methodical. The registered manager speaks knowledgeably about recruitment processes and ensures that the values of the home are integral to the assessment of staff suitability. On one occasion, there was a shortfall in the thoroughness of recruitment checks, though the staff member has been adequately supervised pending resolution.

CCTV is used in the external areas of the home and is present, though not utilised, in one internal room. While there is a policy regarding monitoring and surveillance, the use of CCTV has not been made explicitly clear to children living in the home,

nor has consent been obtained from placing authorities. Leaders are receptive to reviewing the policy and practice of CCTV use at the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has a clear vision for the home. Leaders ensure that staff are compatible with the values of the home and test this during their probation. The registered manager acknowledges that there have been difficulties in recruitment but is focused on staff development and nurturing a committed team. The training that staff have received reflects this, as does the quality of supervision.

The team is in its infancy, but its members demonstrate commitment and trust in one another, as well as their leaders. Leaders said that they feel 'proud' of their staff and 'ambitious for children'. There is an emphasis on transparency and good communication, which strengthens the team and provides a secure base for children. Staff understand the values of the home. They teach and model these values to children.

Staff feel listened to and supported in their roles. They receive regular supervision and are encouraged to develop by the registered manager. One staff member described the registered manager as a 'wisdom tree' because of the emphasis on teaching and his interest in developing staff. There are regular spontaneous quizzes to test staff knowledge and build their confidence around safeguarding, children's care and regulations.

The use of agency staff is kept to a minimum to maintain continuity for children and reduce risks associated with high turnover and unfamiliar staffing. Consistent agency staff are used where possible and the registered manager is working towards creating a group of bank staff to cover rota gaps. Additionally, the 24-hour management plans for children are of a high quality and provide a clear outline for any new or temporary members of the team to follow. These plans include an outline of behavioural triggers, communication preferences and any adaptations children require.

The registered manager maintains good oversight of children's progress and is an active participant in their care. Management monitoring systems are in place and are being streamlined as an ongoing improvement. Staff champions have been allocated to oversee specific areas of practice, such as medication management. This has generated an extra layer of scrutiny in addition to the registered manager and has provided opportunities to upskill the staff group. The additional scrutiny and awareness among staff contribute to a safer environment for children.

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 registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance; so far as reasonably practicable in the light of the child's age and understanding, the child is informed in advance of the intention to do the monitoring or surveillance. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(b)(c)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that the purpose and use of CCTV is reviewed and consent for its use is explicit.	26 October 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that reference checks are obtained in full as part of recruitment checks for all staff, in order to safeguard children and minimise potential risks to them. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: 2644283

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Rocksteady Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 18 Wealden Avenue, Tenterden TN30 6NN

Responsible individual: Lance Miles

Registered manager: Arif Butt

Inspector

Tash Williams, Social Care Inspector

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