

2647153

Registered provider: West Sussex County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by the local authority and provides care for up to six children aged between 12 and 18 years who present with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The home consists of a four-bedroom house and a separate two-bedroom bungalow for children working towards independent living. At the time of the inspection, there were four children in the home, with no children working towards independence.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since September 2021 and holds the relevant qualification.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 December 2022

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be 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: 15 February 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/02/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children are well supported by skilled staff who are attentive to their needs. Staff sensitively support children to explore their identity. Children are able to celebrate difference in a non-judgemental space. Furthermore, staff ensure that children's mental health and emotional well-being are given priority.

While the home has good access to local children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), leaders and managers sought additional therapeutic support when one child needed a more timely intervention.

Staff work closely with other professionals involved in the children's lives. One child's social worker described the significant progress that the child has made regarding positive behaviours and building relationships. The child is better able to manage their emotions, and incidents of aggression have been reduced significantly.

The staff support children to maintain relationships with those who matter most to them. The staff know children's plans and ensure that they see their families and friends in an agreed way. Children's social workers speak highly of the practical and emotional support provided by staff to support and promote family visits.

Staff stay in touch with young people who leave the home and continue to offer support when needed.

All children have a school placement, and staff communicate frequently with school staff. One child is making remarkable progress, while another is attending regularly. There are no firm plans for two children who do not attend school regularly. While staff continue to encourage attendance, they have not reviewed and changed their methods when they have failed to achieve the desired outcome.

The home is spacious, well furnished and well resourced. The outdoor space provides opportunities for children to enjoy games and meals together, with a large BBQ and pizza oven. Children like their bedrooms and enjoy personalising them. Each bedroom reflects an aspect of the child's personality, their interests and hobbies. The staff have acted on children's suggestions to make the communal environment feel homely.

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

Staff encourage positive behaviour through the use of rewards and incentives. However, consequences for children are not always appropriate and proportionate to their behaviour. This is a missed opportunity for children to reflect on their

behaviours and for staff to amend approaches when they are not achieving the desired outcome.

Staff responses to children being missing from home are variable. For one child, there has been a significant reduction in the number of occasions on which the child has been missing. However, one child recently admitted to the home who is known to be at risk of going missing does not have clear and implemented plans in place to mitigate this. The measures in place do not reflect the known needs of the child. Furthermore, learning is not undertaken with the child to explore why they go missing to try and reduce incidents.

Children are not effectively safeguarded at night. For example, waking night staff are not located to observe where children are at night. Children told the inspectors that they sometimes sit on the landing outside their bedrooms at night to talk without staff knowledge. The registered manager is now taking steps to address this.

Strategies to manage conflict between children are not consistently effective. While there is good communication of behavioural concerns to external professionals, the direct work with children has not been effective in reducing conflict between peers in the home.

Staff are familiar with the risks that children can face when using electronic devices, particularly if these allow access to the internet. Therefore, there are successful strategies in place for monitoring children's use of and access to electronic communication devices.

Improvements have been made to recruitment practice. Safe recruitment practices are understood and implemented by the registered manager and staff responsible for this area of practice. Only agency staff who are familiar with the home are employed to work in the home, and checks are carried out to ensure the agency has fulfilled its responsibility to make sure staff are safe to work with children. This reduces the potential for unsuitable adults to be employed at the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is a skilled practitioner. He is motivated to meet the needs of the children and is a good role model for the staff. He learns from practice to improve and has good working relationships with parents and social workers.

The registered manager ensures that all relevant information regarding a young person's background and associated needs is obtained during the pre-admission process. However, the assessment for children coming into the home needs to be more rigorous to ensure that their needs can be managed within the existing group of children.

Furthermore, consequences are not always recorded by staff. The registered manager's audits did not identify that this was happening. Therefore, not all measures were being evaluated.

Children's views are taken into account through monitoring, for example key-work sessions and questionnaires. There is good partnership working with staff from the CAMHS who attend staff meetings and meetings relating to children's care plans.

There is a stable, consistent staff team in place. Staff receive regular and effective supervision from the registered manager, and staff say they feel supported. However, training related to the specific needs of children has not always been available in a timely manner or widely attended.

There has been one complaint since the last inspection, which was managed well, and all necessary actions were taken. However, this was not notified to Ofsted. In addition, Ofsted was not notified about a series of one child's missing-from-home episodes.

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 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; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iv)(vi)) In particular, ensure that night-time arrangements help to keep children safe and that effective action is taken to manage the risks associated with children going missing and conflicts between children.	28 February 2023
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. 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;	28 February 2023

details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and 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 (1)(b) (3)(a)(i)(ii)(v)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) This is in specific reference to recording consequences and monitoring their effectiveness.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)(e))	28 February 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that, when a child placed in the home is not participating in education, the child is supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and is engaged in suitable structured activities. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- The registered person should only accept placements for where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

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: 2647153

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: West Sussex County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, West Street, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 1RG

Responsible individual: Julian Skeates

Registered manager: Eerik Sjostedt

Inspectors

Hannah Cox, Social Care Inspector

Stephen Collett, Social Care Inspector

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