

2661812

Registered provider: SureCare Residential Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to five children with social and emotional difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

The manager has been in post since January 2023 and registered with Ofsted in March 2023.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 August 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: 21 June 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/06/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Since the last full inspection, four children have moved to the home and four children have left. Currently, four children live at the home. Staff establish positive, trusting relationships with children. Consequently, children engage in discussions with staff that help with their understanding of online safety, unsafe situations and how to manage their emotions.

Staff use an electronic record storage system to record children's case files and other documents related to the home. Children said that the staff spend a lot of time typing up daily records. During the inspection, the inspector observed staff typing on laptops instead of fully engaging with the children. This limits the children's experience of feeling cared for and nurtured.

Children said that they can share their thoughts and feelings through the children's meetings and by talking to their key worker or the manager. However, the children do not have regular access to appropriate advocacy support. Therefore, they do not have an independent trusted person to confide in should they need to.

Two children regularly take part in groups, such as outdoor pursuits, indoor climbing, singing and dancing. All the children are offered opportunities to go on community trips to the coast, cinema and restaurants. The older children often refuse to take part, choosing to spend their free time in their bedrooms, watching television, or online gaming. This limits their opportunities to develop positive self-esteem and healthy peer relationships.

All children go to school. One child has completed his GCSEs and is starting college in September. One child, who did not attend school before they moved to the home, is now accessing a return to learn programme for an hour a day. However, staff have not ensured that educational activities are planned for the rest of the day. Therefore, the child's educational progress is restricted.

Children live in a modern, spacious home. Some areas of the home are not decorated and maintained to a good enough standard. There are marks and graffiti on the wall and stained carpets. In one bedroom, a socket and an extension lead were overloaded with plugs. This does not create a safe and homely environment for children.

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

Staff understand safeguarding and generally respond well to concerns. However, on one occasion, staff failed to follow safeguarding procedures when a child made an allegation about a member of staff. The allegation was not promptly reported, and

the member of staff concerned continued to work with the child while the allegation was being investigated. These shortfalls fail to ensure that children are safeguarded effectively and protected from the risk of harm.

There have been incidents of children leaving the house and being reported as missing from the home. The children are at risk of harm when they go missing. Staff respond well; however, independent return-home interviews are not consistently carried out. This reduces the staff's understanding of the child's experiences and the risks they encountered while they were away.

The quality and content of the children's risk assessments and positive behaviour plans are not consistent. Some plans include information that is no longer relevant, while other plans are regularly updated. Consequently, the most-relevant information about children's needs is not consistently available to staff.

The home's location risk assessment does not include consultation with the local police. Important information and crime statistics that could help to minimise the risks to children have not been sufficiently gathered. This does not ensure that staff are continually informed about the area and can mitigate potential concerns.

Staff smoke and use vapes on the premises. On two occasions, children have picked up the staff's vapes and attempted to use them. Children can access the allocated smoking area. This goes against the organisation's smoking policy and does not provide the children with positive role models.

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

The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced. The manager is a visible presence at the home and makes himself available to staff for guidance and advice. Staff receive regular supervision sessions. Consequently, staff said that they feel supported by the manager.

The internal quality of care review does not provide effective analysis of care for children. Several sections in the report have been taken from the previous quality of care review report. This weakens the review and evaluation of the care provided.

The statement of purpose has not been regularly revised or sent to Ofsted within 28 days of its revision.

Some staff use derogatory terms and references in children's case notes. Failing to ensure objective and clear recording means that some information is recorded in a way that is not helpful to the child.

Safe recruitment processes are comprehensively carried out to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. The staff receive a detailed induction, which includes the home's mandatory training and shadow shifts. Good induction, support and training help staff to meet children's needs and provide continuity of care.

Thorough training packages are provided to meet children's individual needs. This helps the staff to feel confident and to be consistent in their responses to children.

A detailed workforce development plan is in place, and this provides strategies to steer improvements to the quality of care.

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— 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; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; 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)(a)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(d)) In particular: ensure that staff understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children; ensure that managers and staff respond effectively and take appropriate action when a child makes an allegation; review the premises to protect children from avoidable risks in relation to staff smoking and using vapes on the premises.	11 September 2023

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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(e)(h)) In particular: ensure that children's plans are regularly reviewed and amended; ensure that staff spend their time appropriately with children and restrict the amount of time that staff spend on laptops; ensure that children's files and documents are stored in the office.	11 September 2023
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— develop positive relationships with them; and engage with them. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that each child— has access to the home's children's guide, and the home's complaints procedure, when the child's placement in the	11 September 2023

home is agreed and throughout the child's stay in the home; and is given appropriate advocacy support. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(ii)(iii)) In particular: ensure that staff consistently engage with older children and encourage them to spend more time out of their bedrooms; ensure that the children's guide contains correct, child-friendly information and is accessible to children; ensure that children have access to independent advocacy support.	
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(v)(vii)) In particular, ensure that children with reduced education timetables are provided with educational activities at home to support their learning and development.	11 September 2023
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each	11 September 2023

child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a)(c)) In particular, ensure that there is a written record of independent return-home interviews with children.	
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report"). (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3))	2 October 2023
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1) (2))	11 September 2023
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision.	11 September 2023

(Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environments that meets the needs of their children; they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 2661812

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: SureCare Residential Ltd

Registered provider address: The Old Snap Factory, Twyford Road, Bishop's Stortford CM23 3LJ

Responsible individual: Emma Barr

Registered manager: Ryan Hayes

Inspectors

Rachel Watkinson, Social Care Inspector
Clare Hannah, Social Care Inspector

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