

2661812

Registered provider: SureCare Residential Limited

Assurance 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 registered with Ofsted since March 2023.

Inspection date: 7 December 2023

Date of last inspection: 2 August 2023

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Outcome from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

Findings from the inspection

This inspection was brought forward to address specific concerns received by Ofsted. At the time of the inspection, there were four children living at the home.

Staff provide good support for children's education. One child has successfully started college where they are excelling on an information technology course. Two children attend local schools. Positive routines have been maintained for a child who has tutoring sessions at the home. Staff have recently introduced an educational timetable which has included a recent visit to the natural history museum in London. This assists the child with their wider learning, in preparation for the child's reintroduction to formal school.

Children said that the staff are more attentive and spending less time writing reports. This has meant that children feel they are better cared for and more valued.

The children's guide has been improved and is more accessible to children. The manager has ensured that external advocacy is now provided to children. This has enabled one child to consider raising a complaint to the local authority in relation to their current care plan. There are ample opportunities for children to express their views and for their rights to be upheld.

One child has been recognised by a placing authority for the progress they have made since living at the home. The child won an award and attended a ceremony with staff which they enjoyed.

Activities that encourage children's hobbies are actively encouraged by staff. Most children attend clubs and participate in a wide range of activities in the community which enrich their experiences. However, one child continues to spend the majority of their free time in their bedroom. Staff's monitoring and support for this child to enable a wider level of activities needs to be improved.

The manager has revised arrangements to respond to safeguarding concerns including when allegations are made against the staff. Safeguarding procedures have been emphasised in team and staff supervision meetings. This increased commitment provides assurances that better systems are in place to safeguard children.

The manager has ensured that children's risk assessments and behaviour management plans provide staff with the most up-to-date and relevant guidance to reduce risks for children. These strategies are followed by staff.

The manager has revised the home's location assessment. Crime statistics have been obtained and evaluated. The assessment includes consultation with the local police liaison officer. This ensures that staff are more informed and better placed to respond to local risks.

There has been one physical intervention since the last inspection. Staff use interventions proportionately and as a last resort. Managers use effective monitoring systems to review incidents and to identify future learning.

Since the last inspection, there have been no incidents when children have gone missing from the home. On one occasion a child was absent after school but their whereabouts were known. In this instance, managers worked with the child and their social worker to identify strategies to reduce potential risks. The manager has also reviewed procedures to ensure return-home interviews are requested when required.

A qualified manager is in post. A newly appointed deputy manager supports them. The manager has taken effective actions to address most of the previous shortfalls.

The manager has undertaken a review of the quality of care. This included a good range of data. Children's parent's and professional views are captured and considered. This has supported the managers understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the care provided.

The manager has appropriately reviewed the staff smoking policy. The homes statement of purpose has been updated and sent into Ofsted, as required.

There has recently been a period of high staff turnover. Despite this, the reasons for staff leaving are not always explored or reviewed by managers. As a result, managers do not have a clear understanding of why the turnover is high. Identifying the underlining reasons are important for children to receive good continuity of care.

The home is modern and spacious. New carpets have recently been fitted in two rooms and one bedroom has been repainted. However, staff's sleep-in beds are stored in a communal entrance hallway which reduces the homely feel. Additionally, door wedges were being used on fire doors. Some of the self-closing door mechanisms were not working. This can increase the risk to children and staff in the event of a fire.

There is generally a suitable process for identifying maintenance works at the home. However, this has not been consistently used by the manager. One broken window handle in a child's bedroom was not documented, making it unclear how long it took to resolve this issue.

Managers have ensured that staff have improved written references used in children's case notes. These are now objective, child-centred and clear. However, more work is needed to embed staffs use of spoken language when talking to

children and recalling children's experiences. Currently, the language used does not align with the therapeutic framework set out in the home's statement of purpose.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/08/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
21/06/2022	Full	Good

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 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— 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)(b) (2)(a)(e)(h)) In particular, ensure that staff turnover is monitored and reviewed to understand and, where possible, address any concerns or trends. Additionally, ensure that maintenance logs are accurate in relation to works required and completed.	5 February 2024
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— develop positive relationships with them; engage with them. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)) In particular, ensure that staff consistently engage with older children and encourage them to spend more time out of their bedrooms.	5 February 2024

This requirement was made at the last inspection and has been restated.	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should consider an alternative storage space for staff sleep-in beds. They should ensure that staffs monitoring of fire doors is consistently effective. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should lead and manage the home in a way that delivers the ethos, outcomes and approach set out in the home's statement of purpose. Specifically, they should ensure that staff use child-centred language. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.4)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2661812

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: SureCare Residential Limited

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

Responsible individual: Emma Barr

Registered manager: Ryan Hayes

Inspector

Mark Anderton, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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