

2679801

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company and provides care for up to five children who experience social and/or emotional difficulties.

Two children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager is not yet registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 January 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 11 October 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/10/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children make excellent progress from their starting points after moving to the home. Staff speak highly of the children and are proud of their achievements. One child said that the staff help them through the difficult times. Another child said that staff support them to make changes and take responsibility for their behaviours. The children recognise the progress that they have made. Children learn about themselves and what help works best for them. This personal growth builds children's self-confidence.

Children receive highly individualised care that meets their complex needs. The home's psychologist is an integral part of the staff team. She produces risk assessments that are based on children's emotions and written from the child's point of view. This encourages empathic practice from staff as they can clearly see what support a child needs with anxiety. The psychologist has a new assessment to develop communication aids for a child. This has improved the child's communication since being at the home. The child's parent said, 'He (the child) stands tall and is more confident.'

Children make excellent progress in education. One child, who previously had not attended school, has exceeded their attendance target and improved their reading age significantly in one school year. The child is now the elected head student and acts as mentor for new children at the school. After making considerable progress, one child's engagement with education has declined. Managers listened to the child's views and understood the child's view on education. Staff are supporting the child to attend alternative education that is specific to his future career choice. The headteacher of the school said that regular meetings with the psychologist and managers have worked well to remove barriers and improve outcomes for children.

Children's health needs are met to a high standard. Managers work closely with health professionals to manage risks regarding children's health. Staff follow clear guidelines when children experience a mental health crisis. Staff respond with sensitivity and compassion. The children and staff explore any underlying reasons. This has led to managers advocating for a child about the decisions made by the local authority to reduce stress for them and their family. Children feel that the staff listen to them and understand what is important to them.

Managers make every effort to ensure that children stay in touch with their families when they live long distances away. Family time has increased for both children. One member of staff stayed in a hotel nearby to support the child and parent when overnight stays were introduced over several weeks. This parent values staff's compassion and the support they offer to help strengthen their relationship with their child. As staff receive training that is specific to the child's needs, this is shared

with the parent. This means that the child benefits from consistency as staff and the parent work together.

Staff support children's interests and help them to make happy memories. One child has enjoyed a holiday abroad with staff. The manager arranged for another child to have a meal with the football team that the child supports. One child wanted to keep going to the football club where he had friends when he moved to the home. Staff have continued to transport the child regularly despite the significant distance. The staff value and support children's existing relationships and interests.

Managers are excellent advocates for the children. The main ethos is listening to and acting on the child's wishes. Staff are alert to children's reactions to any decisions being made. Staff encourage children to influence and participate in their care planning. Given the positive progress made, both children are working towards returning to their local authority areas. Managers use escalation processes persistently when care planning decisions are deemed not in children's best interests. Therefore, the children experience decisions made at a pace that they can manage.

Managers consider children's future plans. They work with the psychologist to draw on their detailed knowledge of a child to provide an excellent trauma-informed tool. This tool provides an accessible summary to help the placing authority and parents to understand the child's needs as well as the staff. Managers use a comprehensive evidence-based approach to fully inform planning decisions for the child.

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

Significant incidents have reduced dramatically for the children since they moved to the home. There has been a considerable reduction in children going missing from care and in children engaging in self-injurious behaviour.

The home's psychologist delivers a specialist programme to assess and address children's specific vulnerabilities. Staff receive a comprehensive training package which enhances the psychologist's work with children. Staff use this understanding in responding to the children's behaviour. The psychologist maintains a detailed behaviour tracker which highlights progress and emerging themes. She works with managers and staff to adapt their approach.

Staff support children to express their emotions in a safe way. One child said that they appreciated staff giving them time to calm before exploring an incident. The children recognise that they have matured since moving to the home. Children can see that there is a reduction in the frequency and intensity of incidents.

Risk assessments are clear and concise. The documents are helpful, the staff can talk with confidence about what they need to do to keep a child safe. Managers ensure that assessments are updated promptly following incidents. Staff review what is happening for children and consider the potential triggers in the wider

context. Staff respond with empathetic discussions and offer reassurance without shame. When staff make changes to safety measures, they explain the reasons clearly to children.

Children express their feelings and worries to trusted adults. The psychologist uses informed knowledge and observations to adapt communication methods for a child. For example, a child was helped to provide a more specific timeline regarding a safety concern. The child contributed to their own personal safety through this excellent initiative.

When safeguarding concerns arise, managers take decisive action. They hold safeguarding agencies to account. One child moved out during the inspection period. Managers balanced the safety needs of all children in the home in their decision-making. This helps children to experience a sense of safety at the home.

Allegations are appropriately investigated. Managers ensure that learning is shared throughout the staff team. Children are informed of the outcome. When allegations are deemed unfounded, managers support children to understand the outcome with sensitivity and reassurance.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager left several months ago. Despite this, leaders have provided good continuity and management oversight. The responsible individual is established and known to the children. He based himself at the home before the registered manager left, taking over the day-to-day running of the home. A deputy manager has been trained during this time with close support from the responsible individual. She has taken on the manager's role. The psychologist has also provided an important source of continuity for children and staff.

Managers have high aspirations for the children. The responsible individual leads a child-focused, motivated team and inspires a culture of improvement for the benefit of the children. Staff say that they enjoy working at the home. They find the induction and training helpful. Staff appreciate the support and constructive feedback from the home's manager.

There is comprehensive monitoring through a variety of quality assurance systems. This helps the manager to ensure that timescales are met for a range of activities that relate to the running of the home. Independent scrutiny is built into the systems. The responsible individual has introduced regular evaluation against The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015. He sets targets under each standard to enhance the experiences for children, such as improving children's participation.

Managers recognise that staff retention has been a challenge. Leaders have developed an action plan. They have a plan of events and initiatives to value staff and support their well-being. The psychologist supports staff morale by holding meetings. This gives staff the opportunity to resolve issues in the team without managers being present. Team meetings have a clear agenda and staff have

detailed discussions. Staff provide constructive challenge to colleagues to ensure positive and consistent experiences for children.

Managers ensure that children live in a comfortable, well-furnished home. It is maintained to a high standard. Home maintenance requests are tracked and addressed without delay.

When children raise issues with managers, such as food shopping arrangements, these are followed up in team meetings. These have been revised in response to children's feedback. One child identified communication between managers and the team sometimes leads to inconsistency and mixed messages about current rules and expectations. One staff member identified while there have been improvements, communication during handovers is another area for further development.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the reasons for reaching day-to-day decisions are carefully explained to and understood by the child or children concerned. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.9)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff consistently follow the home's policies and procedures for the benefit of the children being cared for in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.20)

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: 2679801

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes Limited

Registered provider address: 3 Rayns Way, Syston, Leicester LE7 1PF

Responsible individual: Reece Curtis

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Helen Gronhaug, Social Care Inspector

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