

SC020630

Castle Homes Care Limited

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to accommodate up to six children and young people aged 11 to 18. It provides care for children and young people who have experienced childhood instability, resulting in trauma and associated complex behaviours.

The registered manager's post is vacant. A suitably qualified and experienced interim manager is currently in post.

Inspection date: 3 February 2021

This monitoring visit

This visit took place in response to concerns about incidents involving children in the home as noted in the safeguarding notifications sent to Ofsted. During some of these incidents, a child significantly damaged property in the home and threatened a peer and staff with violence. On several occasions, staff have called the police as they were unable to manage the child's behaviour.

One child is currently in placement and making good progress. Another child has recently left the home.

The inspection identified several shortfalls. These included the poorly-thought-through admission of one child. Staff did not have the skills to meet this child's needs. Staff were unable to sustain positive relationships with the child and, on occasions, used punitive and inappropriate sanctions to manage his behaviour. Staff did not provide the child with enough support to help him understand and take ownership of his behaviours. Furthermore, the responsible individual missed opportunities to intervene and address these shortfalls in a timely manner.

One child, who no longer lives at the home, was involved in numerous incidents in which he threatened and attempted to physically assault staff and another child who was also living in the home at the time. On some occasions, the child injured his peer. Staff required police assistance as they were unable to manage these

incidents. It is likely that both children will have been unsettled and frightened on these occasions.

Managers served notice on the child's placement, as they felt they could no longer meet his needs. However, some aspects of this child's move to his new home were poorly managed. For example, staff did not fully share key information with the child's new carers. This was despite his new carers requesting this information on several occasions. These shortfalls had the potential to undermine the child's new placement.

During the inspection, some professionals and a family member raised concerns about staff practice and conduct. Feedback included concerns that staff lacked understanding and knowledge about one child's complex behaviours. This meant that staff focused on the child's challenging behaviours as opposed to understanding and addressing the reasons for his behaviour.

Professionals told the inspector that staff relationships with one child had deteriorated over time. For example, some staff used inappropriate language while others used sanctions to manage the child's behaviour. On one occasion, a child was denied a celebratory takeaway meal as punishment for running away from staff. This punitive and ill-informed practice is likely to have led to the child feeling rejected and increasingly unsettled and anxious.

One child made several allegations against staff following incidents of him being restrained. In most instances, the manager fully investigated the child's concerns. However, on one occasion, the manager, who no longer works at the home, failed to update the designated officer and child's local authority about the outcome of her internal investigation. This was a missed opportunity for the designated officer and local authority to assess risk and review the arrangements for keeping children safe.

The COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic has limited the responsible individual's visits to the home. This has had an impact on her monitoring of children's care. Furthermore, the responsible individual believes that the previous manager, who left the organisation in December 2020, was not fully transparent about the shortfalls in staff practice and children's care.

The responsible individual is undertaking an internal investigation to explore the shortfalls in staff conduct identified during this inspection. She acknowledges that staff have not always provided good care to children.

An experienced interim manager is currently managing the home. This has been a positive change for the leadership of the home. A permanent manager is currently being recruited.

The responsible individual recently implemented a development plan to improve staff practice and to try and improve the quality of the care that children receive. There are early indicators that this plan is having a positive impact. For example, staff told

the inspector that morale has improved, and they feel better supported by managers. Through supervisions and support from the new manager, staff have increasing opportunities to reflect on their practice and learn.

The one child currently living in the home feels increasingly safe and settled. This is in part because he is living in the home on his own. The child is developing positive relationships with staff.

Over recent weeks, the responsible individual has worked hard to improve the quality of care planning documentation. As a result, behaviour management plans and risk assessments are now detailed and provide staff with clear strategies to support the child.

The responsible individual has implemented new processes to improve the planning prior to a child moving into the home. Furthermore, the responsible individual will have oversight over all admissions to ensure that they are appropriate and in line with the home's statement of purpose.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/01/2020	Full	Good
06/03/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
11/09/2018	Full	Good
27/02/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be 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, 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 children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— develop positive relationships with them; engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c))	22 March 2021
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;	22 March 2021

communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(ix))	
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— 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 effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v)(vi)(vii))	22 March 2021
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—	22 March 2021

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(f)(h))	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home’s statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(a))	22 March 2021

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children’s home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC020630

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Castle Homes Care Limited

Registered provider address: Fifth Floor, 80 Hammersmith Road, London W14 8UD

Responsible individual: Sophie Nicholls

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Gareth Leckey, Social Care Inspector

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