

SC020630

Registered provider: Castle Homes Care Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to care for up to six children aged eight to 18 years who have experienced childhood instability, resulting in trauma and associated complex behaviours.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2023.

Inspection date: 15 February 2023

Date of last inspection: 22 June 2022

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.

The inspector has 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'.

Findings 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.

The care of children

At this inspection, no children were living at the home. The one child who had been living there had left. Managers made the difficult decision to serve notice because they felt the home could no longer meet the child's needs. The child had also expressed a wish to move to a less rural location.

Staff have developed personalised plans for children. These detail how staff support children to achieve their targets. Staff regularly review and amend the plans so that they are achievable. Along with the positive relationships staff had developed with the child, the child had begun to make small steps of progress. There had been an improvement in the child's attendance in education, they had begun to develop some independence skills, and they had joined the gym and taken up boxing lessons.

Staff have been proactive in supporting the child's regular visits to their family. After a period of supporting those visits, the child was able to have overnight stays, included staying over Christmas. As a result, they felt a valued part of their family.

The home is a large house with lots of space for children to be together or on their own. The home is well furnished and decorated and feels like a home. The garden is spacious and houses the resident chickens. The home also has two cats and a dog. While the child lived at the home, they found having pets was beneficial. They were able to learn about animal care, and how to be tolerant and take responsibility to care for something else.

The safety of children

Staff have developed risk assessments and behaviour plans which help them to understand how best to support children when in crisis. However, on one occasion, an incident escalated and staff had to call police for assistance. Managers and staff reflected on this and identified that if the staff supporting the child had undertaken the relevant behaviour management training they may have been able to de-escalate the situation themselves. Though no one was harmed, the lack of staff skills did mean there was a risk of harm to the child or others.

When children present unwanted behaviours, staff use consequences. Staff talk to children about the behaviours and get their views on how staff can best support them. All then agree what the consequences will be. This approach helps children to take responsibility for their actions. As a result, consequences are a learning opportunity.

On occasions, staff have needed to use physical intervention when other methods of de-escalation have failed. Records are clear, with management oversight of whether intervention was appropriate. Records clearly show that physical intervention is only used as a last resort.

Children rarely go missing from the home but when they do, staff follow the missing-from-home protocol and actively search for them. As a result, children are returned to the home quickly.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

The manager has now registered with Ofsted. She is experienced and aspirational about children receiving the best possible care.

Managers have taken action to meet the requirements and recommendations from the last inspection. However, two new requirements were made at this visit.

When concerns are raised, managers take prompt action to report and investigate. However, on one occasion, the manager failed to notify Ofsted of an allegation against a worker at the home. This omission means the regulator is unable to fully monitor the home.

Managers are in the process of recruiting new staff to the home before admitting further children. There are plans in place for a comprehensive induction, so that those working at the home have all the relevant skills they need.

The manager has used her monitoring systems to identify areas for improvement. She has reflected on the previous child's placement and developed an ambitious plan for the home. This includes being registered to support children's learning through the unit award scheme (AQA).

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/06/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
01/03/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
28/01/2020	Full	Good
06/03/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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 the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(b)) Specifically, that the registered person ensures children are cared for by staff who have the skills to keep them safe. When there are shortfalls which may compromise children's safety, there should be robust risk assessments and contingency plans in place.	16 April 2023
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. (Regulation 40 (4)(c))	16 April 2023

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC020630

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Castle Homes Care Limited

Registered provider address: The Forge, Church Street West, Woking, Surrey
GU21 6HT

Responsible individual: Sophie Nicholls

Registered manager: Marie Manton

Inspector

Debbie Bond, Social Care Inspector

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