

SC020630

Registered provider: Castle Homes Care Limited

Full 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 11 to 18 years who have experienced childhood instability, resulting in trauma and associated complex behaviours.

The home has not had a registered manager since November 2021. There is a manager in post who is yet to submit her application Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 June 2022

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	inadequate
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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: 1 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/03/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
28/01/2020	Full	Good
06/03/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
11/09/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

One child was living at the home at the time of this inspection. The other child's placement was ended by the manager due to external factors that unsettled the child, resulting in staff not being able to manage the child's behaviours. Prior to this crisis period, the child had been making progress.

The home has experienced a lot of change over the past few months, with staff leaving and new staff being recruited to the home. Despite reluctance by the child to engage with staff, staff have worked hard to build positive relationships with them. As a result, the child has started to make small steps of progress and is beginning to trust staff.

Staff have developed individualised plans for children. However, some of these plans are confusing and result in inconsistent care. This is because staff do not promptly update plans when things change, for example children's daily routines or if family visits are supervised or not.

Care plan targets for children are broad in nature. Children's care plans do not provide staff with the detail they need to be consistent in their approach. This does not help the child meet that target. Reviews of the child's care are not yet in place. This could result in inconsistency of care and children not progressing as well as they could be.

Staff are proactive in supporting and encouraging children to attend education. For one child who was previously a reluctant attender, staff have helped and encouraged them to attend. They have gone from not previously attending education to now attending 50% of the time. As a result, this child is learning the importance of education as well as making new friends.

Staff have taken action to ensure that children's health needs are met. Staff encourage children to attend appointments to discuss relevant health issues. Staff have made referrals to other professionals where necessary. Children's engagement with health professionals is improving as staff help children to understand the importance of proactive healthcare.

Children's moves to and from the home are well planned. Staff continued to support a child in the days after they moved from the home, visiting and offering telephone advice. This helped the child to settle into their new home.

Staff encourage children to keep in touch with their families. Staff take children to visits and encourage visits to the home. Children also have their own phones, which allows them to stay in touch with their friends and families.

Children participate in activities away from the home. Children take part in cadets and football club. Staff arrange introductory visits so that children can have taster sessions at clubs to see what they like. Children also visit the coast, safari parks, go shopping and visit places of interest. This helps to develop children's confidence and self-esteem.

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

Staff have created good-quality risk assessments and behaviour plans for children. They identify known risks and how staff can support children when they are distressed. On occasions, staff use physical intervention to keep children and others safe. However, some staff who are not trained in physical intervention are supporting staff who are trained. There are no risk assessments or guidance in place for this. This practice could result in children being harmed or unapproved techniques being used.

Staff complete records when physical interventions are used and the quality of these recordings has improved. However, when the manager has been involved in using a physical intervention, records do not show that there has been independent oversight of its appropriateness by another person who was not involved. Records of staff debriefs are not clearly recorded. This does not help the manager to review and improve staff's practice. Occasionally, the debrief with the child has been undertaken by the person involved in the intervention. This does not give the child an opportunity to raise concerns with someone not involved.

Managers have put in place protocols and safety measures for children who are at risk of child sexual exploitation when online. However, staff have not had training in online safety for children. This means that staff are not fully aware of the signs that children are being exploited or groomed for exploitation online.

Staff working at the home do not always have a first-aid qualification and on two occasions it was noted by the inspector that there were no staff on duty who had the relevant training. This places children at risk should they require first aid. The manager is aware of this shortfall and is taking action to ensure that there are sufficient staff with a qualification in first aid on shift.

Staff recruitment follows safer recruitment guidance. However, for one worker the reason for them leaving previous employments involving children or vulnerable adults was not recorded. This reduces the provider's ability to truly satisfy themselves that staff are suitable to work with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The home has not had a registered manager since November 2021. The current manager has not yet submitted an application to register with Ofsted. The manager has experience of managing and working in children's settings. She knows children

well and is aware of the shortfalls of the home. She has plans in place to improve practice in the home to provide good-quality care for children.

There are several new staff working in the home. Some are experienced, with others being new to children's residential services. Staff have an induction over a two-week period which is a combination of training, reading and shadowing of staff. However, staff have not completed all the training needed to meet the needs of children living at the home, for example caring for children with global development delay, keeping children safe online, first aid, and caring for children who are at risk of child sexual exploitation. This means that staff do not have all the skills and knowledge they need to care for children.

Managers have developed new monitoring systems to monitor children's progress. However, it is too early to tell if these monitoring system are effective in reviewing the quality of care and the progress children make.

Managers have lacked professional curiosity when reviewing incidents. Records have implied a physical intervention has been used or the wording is unclear, which leaves the reader to question how staff managed the situation. This lack of professional curiosity means that the manager cannot be certain that staff are recording accurately what has happened or that they are not using appropriate methods of physical intervention.

The home's manager has started to develop a research and learning file. As part of staff's development, staff read, summarise and then present their findings to the team. This provides additional learning to staff to help them improve the quality of care given to children.

Managers have taken complaints and allegations seriously. Managers have taken prompt action in reporting and investigating concerns. This means that children feel valued and listened to.

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)) The registered person should ensure that risk assessments and guidance are in place for staff who are supporting physical interventions when not trained to undertake physical interventions.	5 August 2022
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 staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) The registered person should ensure that staff have all the training they need to care for children living at the home, such as global development delay, first aid, risks to children online, and child sexual exploitation. In addition, the manager should submit an application to register with Ofsted so that the regulator can determine if they have the required skills, qualification and experience required for their role.	5 August 2022

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— 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)) The registered person should ensure that changes to the home's placement plan are promptly updated; for example, when visits can be unsupervised and targets clearly show what the target is, how staff support children to meet the target and how this will be reviewed.	5 August 2022
The registered person must ensure that the employment of any person on a temporary basis at the children's home does not prevent children from receiving such continuity of care as is reasonable to meet their needs. The registered person must ensure that— at all times, at least one person on duty at the home has a suitable first aid qualification. (Regulation 31 (1) (2)(a)) The registered person should ensure that there is at least one person on duty who is first-aid trained.	24 June 2022
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and	5 August 2022

has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and

within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(c))

The registered person should ensure that debriefs are undertaken and if the intervention was undertaken by the manager it is reviewed by another member of the management team. When records are not clear, managers should use their professional curiosity in satisfying themselves that interventions used were appropriate or not used.

Recommendation

- The registered person should maintain good employment practice. They should ensure that recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. Specifically, checks should be conducted as to why someone left a previous employment which involved working with children or vulnerable adults. ('Guide to the Children's Home's Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: 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: Post vacant

Inspector

Debbie Bond, Social Care Inspector

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