

SC030797

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home is registered to provide care for up to nine children with social, emotional and mental health needs. At the time of this inspection, there were five children living in the home.

The manager of the home registered with Ofsted in April 2016 and is suitably qualified.

Inspection date: 10 August 2023

This monitoring visit

There is an active police investigation on-going at the home that the registered provider has failed to inform the regulator of as is required under the regulations. This inhibits the regulators' ability to have oversight of the safeguarding practice of the registered provider.

Where a child has raised an allegation, this has not been reported to the local authority designated safeguarding officer or the regulator. Furthermore, concerns raised during this incident have not been fully explored which have led to poor safeguarding practice and decision making.

Records made following incidents are sometimes edited by senior managers for clarity. However, original copies of staff entries are not retained. Daily records are handwritten and some of these are not legible. This makes it difficult to review some records and incidents and will be difficult for children to understand, should they wish to access their records in the future.

The reports for the review of the quality of care by an independent person lack rigour and are not sufficient for the registered manager to use to drive improvements in the home.

The registered manager has addressed concerns around staff practice. However, there is a lack of formal supervision and records to evidence the support given to the staff. Staff supervision records are poor and some are duplicated for different staff members.

Some staff are not aware of the registered provider's whistle-blowing policy and procedure and of how they can escalate their concerns. Other, more experienced, staff are confident in their understanding of the whistle-blowing procedures and the safeguarding policy.

There continue to be insufficient staff to care for the children. This means that shifts are often short staffed, and the registered manager and staff work excessive hours. This can also impact on the day-to-day shift planning, and limits what activities children can do.

There has been an isolated incident of bullying between children. The registered manager has taken swift and effective action to address this and put measures in place to safeguard the children involved. There are protective factors in place for children's safety and the monitoring of electronic devices.

The responsible individual has no direct oversight of the children's home and has not visited for many years. This oversight is delegated to senior managers who report back to the responsible individual.

External feedback from one child's local authority was positive and noted that relationships between staff and the child were positive and the child is well cared for.

Due to the concerns raised at this inspection, the registered provider was issued a notice of restriction of accommodation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/05/2023	Full	Inadequate
21/03/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
28/07/2021	Full	Good
19/11/2019	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 with 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 staff— take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vi)) This specifically relates to taking effective action if a child makes an allegation of harm.	31 August 2023
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. ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(d)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that there are sufficient skilled and experienced staff to support the children.	31 August 2023
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—	31 August 2023

an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(c)(e))	
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 each child’s relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(c)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that: children’s plans are updated, in collaboration with children’s social care professionals, to reflect their current care needs; health plans are updated with children’s current health needs; ensure risk plans to guide staff when children go missing are updated to reflect current practice. This requirement was not tested as the due date had not passed and is restated.	31 August 2023
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— support each child’s learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and,	31 August 2023

where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(ii)(viii)) In particular, the registered provider should ensure there is a timely plan for a child to return to formal education. There should also be a structured plan in place for the child's education during this period so that their learning continues in the home. This requirement was not tested as the due date had not passed and is restated.	
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— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;	31 August 2023

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 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)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that: a record is made following an incident of a child being restrained; a record is made of any consequences used in relation to children's behaviour; children are spoken to following any incident of being restrained and a record of this is made. This requirement was not tested as the due date had not passed and is restated.	
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) In particular, the registered provider should ensure: original records are retained; amendments made to any records are signed and dated; records are legible.	31 August 2023
The registered person must ensure that all employees—	31 August 2023

receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)(c)) This requirement was not tested as the due date had not passed and is restated.	
A responsible individual must— have the capacity, experience and skills to supervise the management of the home, or the homes, in respect of which the responsible individual is nominated. (Regulation 26 (7)(b)) In particular, the responsible individual must demonstrate the arrangements for their direct oversight of the children's home, management and staffing.	31 August 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that, just as in a family home, children should be able to access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. Any modifications to the home may only be put in place to safeguard each child in the home and should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child's needs, be properly recorded and be kept under regular review. This specifically relates to the bedroom door alarms, the switches for turning off the television in each child's room and ensuring children can access their bedrooms without asking staff. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10.) This is restated from the last inspection.
- The registered person should ensure that any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person must make a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

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: SC030797

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Registered provider address: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited, 17 Leigh Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 5EU

Responsible individual: Leslie Davenport

Registered manager: Sidney Coffin

Inspector

Sara Stoker, Social Care Inspector

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