

SC030797

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Full inspection

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 dates: 11 and 12 September 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

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: 23 May 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

The provider has been issued with a notice restricting accommodation until 5 November 2023.

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

Inspection judgements

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

Since the last inspection, no children have moved out of the home. A restriction notice was issued following the last inspection to prevent any further children moving into the home and allow for a period of stability.

The home remains well presented and is a bright, well-furnished space for the children to live in. There are books, games and toys for the children to play with. The children have enjoyed a range of activities over the summer holidays, such as swimming and trips to the beach.

All children are making some progress. This is limited due to shortfalls in the care planning for the children, meaning staff are not always aware of the development needs and goals for the children to continue to make progress. However, senior leaders recognise that this needs to improve and have started to make plans to address this.

Four of the children have returned to school following the summer break. One child still has no formal education. However, senior leaders have advocated for the child with the host and placing local authority for a suitable school to be identified. There are plans in the interim to support a structured day for this child to engage in education with the staff at home.

The staff are not proactive in supporting some children's identity. For example, one child who would like to attend church has been unable to do so as this clashes with the time they see their family. No alternative arrangements have been considered by the registered manager to allow this child to explore their faith.

The staff and children have regular meetings where the children's views are sought, including their ideas on activities, meals and any changes taking place in the home.

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

The staff do not always respond consistently to the children with care and nurture. While the inspector observed some staff providing nurture and effective guidance to children, this was not consistent when staff were trying to uphold boundaries with a child.

There continue to be shortfalls in children's plans regarding their health needs. For example, there is conflicting information across different care plans regarding one child's allergies and doses of medication. Records are not consistently updated following changes to children's healthcare needs, therefore, staff are being given confusing information.

Risk assessment plans have not adequately identified locked fire exits and mitigated this risk. Therefore, in the event of a fire, the home could not be safely evacuated. Arrangements were made during the inspection to take action to rectify this.

Since the last inspection, there has been one allegation made by a child. Senior leaders took appropriate action to safeguard the children and report and investigate this allegation, and they demonstrated appropriate safeguarding practice.

The area manager has ensured that staff understand their responsibilities regarding the provider's whistle-blowing policy and what action to take if they have any safeguarding concerns.

The use of restorative consequences to support children in times of difficulty has improved. This includes matching the consequence to the behaviour, to provide a restorative approach so the children can learn about appropriate responses when they are struggling.

The staff ensure that records are completed following any restraints. These are also reviewed by the registered manager. Work has been undertaken with staff in team meetings to improve recording across all documents.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The registered manager has resigned and will shortly be leaving the organisation. The area manager has stepped in to support the day-to-day management of the home. He has started to embed changes to the culture in the home and support the staff to provide consistent care to the children. There are plans to further develop the staff team.

The registered manager failed to take appropriate action following the previous inspection to report an allegation made by a child and ensure appropriate plans were put into place to safeguard the child. However, the area manager took action during this inspection to rectify this. Additionally, safeguarding measures were implemented and shared with the local authority designated safeguarding team and the child's local authority.

At the previous inspection, a requirement was made in relation to notifying Ofsted of an ongoing police investigation. The registered manager failed to ensure this notification had been made. The area manager took action during this inspection to rectify this.

The registered manager has not made the necessary changes to update all children's care plans so that they reflect current staff practice. This means children receive inconsistent care, as plans to guide staff are confusing, which is limiting children's progress. This requirement was raised at the last full inspection and is repeated.

The registered manager has increased the frequency of staff supervision and staff say they have regular supervision. However, no records of supervision are available as the registered manager has not yet completed these. The staff and registered manager have still not received their annual appraisal. This requirement was raised at the last full inspection and is repeated.

The responsible individual has increased their direct oversight of the home and made arrangements to have regular discussions with the registered manager and to visit the children in the home.

The registered manager has implemented new ways of working to improve their monitoring and oversight of the care for children. This is in the early stages of development and there are plans to develop senior staff to support this. However, some requirements made at the previous inspection have not been met. For example, children's plans have been updated but are incorrect or not reflective of current practice.

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— protect and promote each child's welfare; treat each child with dignity and respect; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(ii)(iii)(iv)) In particular, the registered provider should ensure children receive consistent care that promotes their welfare and is personalised to meet their needs.	27 October 2023
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))	27 October 2023

In particular, the registered person should ensure that: children's plans are updated, in collaboration with children and their social care professionals, to reflect their current care needs; health plans are updated with children's current health needs. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23 (1)) This specifically relates to the records of children's medication containing updated and accurate information.	27 October 2023
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(1) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b)) This specifically relates to the locking of external doors used as fire escapes.	29 September 2023
The registered person must ensure that all employees— 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)) In particular, the registered provider should ensure records are available to demonstrate effective supervision and appraisal have taken place. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	27 October 2023

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: 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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