

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 eight children with complex needs resulting from their early life experiences.

The manager of the home registered with Ofsted in April 2016.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 March 2023

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	requires improvement to be good
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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: 28 July 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/07/2021	Full	Good
19/11/2019	Full	Good
04/09/2018	Full	Good
22/11/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

At the time of this inspection, eight children were living at the home. Five children had moved out since the previous inspection.

The home has some areas that have been decorated and the lounge is a pleasant and comfortable space. However, there are some damp areas in the kitchen, a broken window upstairs and dust in the bedrooms. The bedrooms and hallways upstairs need to be refreshed, offering children a more personalised and less institutional feel.

The bedroom doors have alarms on, and although assessments are in place for these, they are not individual to each child. There are switches to turn off children's television aerials at night. It is not clear why children need these measures or whether they are necessary for each child.

Children's bedroom doors are locked from the outside, and they need keys to access their bedrooms. Some children have lost their keys, which have not been replaced. Therefore, the children are unable to access their bedrooms without asking the staff.

The children build positive relationships with a number of the staff who have worked at the home for some time. This is evident in the positive interactions between them. The staff are committed to the children. Staff are compassionate, friendly and warm. This helps children to feel safe and cared for.

The home has two education provisions that are part of the organisation. All of the children attend these provisions. There have been some challenges for some of the children at school. The home staff and the school staff work closely together to support children to access education and to try to understand any challenges. Both schools provided very good feedback about the communication and the support that the staff offer. Working together with education professionals means that children are able to access education that is tailored to their needs.

There is a strong emphasis on children taking part in activities. The children take part in local football and cricket clubs, and enjoy the local parks and beaches. Exercise and activities are important for children, and help them to stay healthy and develop their physical skills.

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

Children's records do not always contain up-to-date information or strategies on how to keep children safe. This means that there is important information missing that could reduce the quality of care that children receive.

Staff are trained in physical restraint and use this when necessary to keep children safe. However, the records do not always refer to the agreed terminology. This does not ensure that children are held in a safe way using agreed techniques that can be objectively reviewed.

There have been some occasions when important fire checks and evacuations have not been undertaken. Regular fire safety monitoring is essential to protect children and staff from significant harm.

There has been a high turnover of staff. However, a recruitment drive is now under way, and leaders and managers are considering how best to recruit and retain staff.

There are some good key-work sessions with children but these are not consistent. Children are not all offered key-work sessions that are individual to their needs. This leads to missed opportunities to support children and increase their well-being.

Staff recruitment files are efficiently managed. There is a structure in place to ensure that all checks are carried out and recorded. This ensures that children are protected from unsuitable staff.

Staff are clear about expectations when responding to suspicions of harm or allegations made by the children. This helps to protect children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The manager is very experienced and has been in post since 2016. He is clearly dedicated to the children in his care. This helps children to feel valued.

There are shortfalls in the oversight and general monitoring of the home. The monitoring and review of the children's records are not effective. This impacts on the staff's ability to care for children in a considered way and understand the specific support that each child needs and why.

The supervision records are not available, and leaders and managers agree there have been gaps in the frequency of these. This means that staff are not receiving the required support that enables them to care for children effectively.

The manager has failed to identify all of the strengths and weaknesses identified. He has plans in place to continue to move these forward. Staff shortages have affected his capacity to carry out his role fully. Two members of staff have recently been promoted to senior positions. This will strengthen the service and enable better oversight.

The staff induction process is good. New staff spoke highly about the support that they receive from the organisation. Mandatory training is up to date and there is a very good offer for supplementary training to further upskill the team.

The manager received positive feedback from the children's families and professionals, who noted the commitment and support that he offers.

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)) In particular, ensure that all children's risk assessments are up to date.	28 April 2023
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(1) applies to the home— paragraph (1) does not apply; and 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)(a)) In particular, monitor and review the weekly fire checks to ensure these are kept up to date.	28 April 2023
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. (Regulation 35 (1)(b) (2)) In particular, use the techniques and language that relates to the behaviour management training provided.	1 May 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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))	1 May 2023
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home provides a nurturing, supportive and homely environment that meets the needs of the children. In particular, clean the children's bedrooms, and redecorate the hallway and the kitchen ceiling. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- 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. In particular, review the bedroom door alarms and the switches for turning off children's televisions and ensure that children can access their bedrooms without asking staff. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- The registered person should have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

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: 17 Leigh Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 5EU

Responsible individual: Leslie Davenport

Registered manager: Sidney Coffin

Inspector

Mary Costello, Social Care Inspector

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