

SC031410

Registered provider: East Sussex County Council

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by the local authority. It provides care for up to seven children with learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities.

There has been no registered manager since January 2024.

At the time of this inspection, seven children were living at the home.

Inspection date: 12 February 2025

Date of last inspection: 3 December 2024

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.

A stable staff team provides care for the children. This stability means that staff know the children well. The children seek out staff and enjoy playing games and having fun with them.

Since the last full inspection, leaders have carried out a quality of care review and submitted the report to Ofsted. They have developed their monitoring systems to strengthen oversight of the children's care. There are clear action plans in place to improve the quality of care for the children.

Staff have included the children in decisions around decorating the home environment. A local artist is collaborating with the staff and children to decorate communal areas and personalise the children's bedroom doors. The home is welcoming and homely, with the children's photos displayed proudly in the communal areas. The children's bedrooms are highly personalised, and children enjoy spending time in their bedrooms.

Staff help the children to make decisions about their care. They use visual aids to support communication with the children. For example, one child has a board to help them make decisions about how they would like their hair styled.

Staff work closely with specialist health services to meet the children's complex needs. One child has a recently diagnosed swallowing difficulty. The child's plans have been promptly updated to reflect this change in needs and minimise risks for them when they are eating and drinking. When the children are upset or hurt themselves, staff ensure that they have the support and medical attention that they need.

Staff are knowledgeable about the risks for the children. They are highly informed about the children's vulnerabilities. A new deputy manager has been appointed, who is an experienced practitioner and has a wealth of understanding about the children's complex needs.

Leaders learn from incidents. Following incidents, reflection with staff takes place, and staff seek to understand how incidents affect children and whether any lessons can be learned to improve practice. Despite this, there are still occasions when one child enters other children's bedrooms and causes damage to their items. When this happens, staff look at what has gone wrong and learn lessons. They have made changes to practice and the environment to reduce the likelihood of incidents occurring. Although incidents are reducing between children, they are still happening.

Leaders identify and act on poor practice. They share concerns about staff with the local authority designated officer and the child's social worker. Leaders carry out investigations fairly, and the organisation's disciplinary procedures are followed if necessary. Leaders provide feedback to staff about their performance and implement plans to support their development.

Staff use some restrictive practices with the children. Specifically, staff lock doors to prevent children from accessing some areas of the home. Staff use this measure to safeguard the children. However, this practice has not been clearly assessed to ensure that it is suitable and proportionate, nor is it kept under regular review.

Leaders provide staff with supervision sessions more regularly and have reviewed the appraisal system. However, these improvements are not yet fully embedded. Supervision sessions are of good quality and include feedback about practice, learning from incidents, and discussions about the children. However, staff do not use supervision to regularly discuss safeguarding themes.

The manager has not fully submitted their application to register with Ofsted.

The leaders have met one requirement and all the recommendations raised at the last inspection. Two requirements remain, and one new requirement has been raised for the manager to apply to register with Ofsted.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/12/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
28/06/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
27/03/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
23/03/2022	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 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 staff— manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iv)(v)) This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	1 March 2025
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)) In particular, the manager must register with Ofsted.	24 April 2025
The registered person must ensure that all employees—	1 April 2025

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 raised at the last inspection and is restated.	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all restrictive practices are recorded and assessed in the children's plans, agreed with professionals and reviewed regularly to ensure that they are still required. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.42)
- The registered person should ensure that staff use supervision to discuss safeguarding topics to engage them in the safeguarding culture of the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.14)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC031410

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: East Sussex County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1UE

Responsible individual: Fiona Lewis

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Mark Dawkins, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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