

SC031410

Registered provider: East Sussex County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by the local authority. The service is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to seven children and young people who have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities.

The registered manager successfully registered with Ofsted in April 2018.

Inspection dates: 22 to 23 October 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 13 December 2017

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
13/12/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
22/02/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
06/07/2016	Full	Outstanding
22/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard; the registered person must ensure that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk from harm; 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 (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v))	31/12/2018

Recommendations

- All staff in a care role, including external agency or bank staff, must have the qualification in regulation 32(4) within the relevant timescale listed in regulation 32(5). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.12)
- The registered person should have a system in place so that all serious events are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate people. The system should cover the action that should be followed if the event arises at the weekend or on a public holiday. Notification must include details of the action taken by the home's staff in response to the event. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.13)
- The home's staff should recognise and celebrate the achievements of their

children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.7)

In particular, ensure that children's photographs and life story books are kept up to date to support them to celebrate their achievements.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from care that is delivered by staff who are attuned to their needs. The staff are knowledgeable about children's specific complex care needs, and staff are adept at picking up on cues and communicating effectively. Children build trusting relationships with familiar staff. These relationships are developed over time and are based on mutual respect.

Feedback from families is positive. A family member said of the home, 'I can't fault it; the staff really listen to me and take great care of [name of child]. Her health has improved, as they make sure she gets what she needs.'

Staff encourage the children to make informed choices. The opinion of children is sought regarding their preferences, and home meetings ensure that the children can participate in decisions about the development of the home. An advocate visits the home regularly to ensure that children's voices are heard independently.

Children enjoy a range of stimulating activities. They are actively engaged in the community; enthusiastic staff ensure that children's interests are encouraged and that they can enjoy meaningful pastimes. However, the photographs and memory books of such experiences are not kept up to date, with many photos stored on computers. This is a missed opportunity to reflect on positive times with the children and to create a lasting visual memory for children before they move on.

The staff work in partnership with a wide range of specialists to ensure that the care that is delivered promotes independence. Sensory diets have been successfully implemented to reduce stress for some children. Other children have care plans that incorporate 'zones of regulation' to support a reduction in anxious behaviours.

Admissions to the home have been well planned. Staff are trained to manage children's specific medical conditions and care procedures prior to children arriving at the home. In one case, this enabled an emergency admission to take place, as staff were trained during the referral process. When children have left the home, their departure has been well planned and staff keep in touch with them. This reassures children and has supported a smooth transition to their new homes.

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

When serious events occur, staff know what to report, to whom and when. However, not all notifications to Ofsted are made in a timely way. Records are, however, clear and provide a detailed account of safeguarding incidents.

Some risk assessments have been weak. The risk assessment relating to a planned holiday was particularly poor. It did not consider the sleeping arrangements and staff did not follow the risk-reduction strategy, which was to supervise the children at all times. This led to the children engaging in risky behaviour while unsupervised by staff.

Risk management at the home has also been inconsistent. One child went into another child's room during the night on multiple occasions over a period of months. This was not managed effectively by staff, who at times were not supervising the settling time sufficiently to reduce this risk.

However, staff manage complex and critical care needs well. Their vigilance has ensured that children receive medical attention quickly. Medication is meticulously administered, and health advice is followed 'to the letter'. As a result of this, children's health needs are managed effectively and, for some children, their health has improved as a direct result of the care they have received.

Staff are attuned to the children's behaviours. They use 'zones of regulation' to indicate early warning signs and implement measures to reduce the potential for challenges. However, this approach is yet to be fully integrated into practice, and it is not yet reflected on in the debriefs that follow incidents.

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

Leaders and managers have been inconsistent in their response to, and management of, some safeguarding incidents. In one example, there was no formal managerial investigation into the failure of staff to follow a risk assessment. This was a missed opportunity to fully explore the staff's understanding and to address any learning needs.

In other aspects, the registered manager has a sound grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. She leads the development of the service to meet the changing needs of the children. Her child-centred approach ensures that the decisions made reflect a focus on achieving positive outcomes for them.

Changes to the staffing rotas led to a consultation period, resulting in the registered manager adapting the rotas in line with the preferred options of staff. This is indicative of her inclusive approach. Staff described her as supportive, and a good listener. They feel that she is approachable and that she takes their opinions seriously.

Staff receive regular supervision. They are clear about leadership aims and share the same high aspirations in delivering a good-quality service. Effective succession planning has enabled some staff to achieve promotion.

Training ensures that the members of the workforce have the knowledge to enable them to deliver the home's objectives. However, some agency staff are unqualified and do not have the required level 3 social care qualification. Development plans include the addition of training to ensure that all staff will soon be sufficiently qualified.

The registered manager is reflective in her practice. She makes good use of her own monitoring and uses the actions of the independent reports to enhance the quality of the service and to drive forward improvements. She has ensured that the home's maintenance is prompt and she has improved the look of the home through a decorating programme to create a more homely feel.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC031410

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: County Hall, St Annes Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex
BN7 1UE

Responsible individual: Elizabeth Rugg

Registered manager: Charlotte De Retuerto

Inspector:

Sarah Olliver, social care inspector

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