

SC031410

Registered provider: East Sussex County Council

Full 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.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since April 2018.

There were six children living in the home at the time of this inspection.

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 March 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 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/03/2022	Full	Good
22/01/2020	Full	Good
18/02/2019	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
22/10/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Children's experiences and outcomes since the last inspection have been mixed.

An assessment of a child's suitability to live in the home did not fully consider the other children already living there. Some known risks were not considered. The impact on the other children of the child's behaviours and the need for the child to have three agency carers with him at all times was also not fully explored. For example, for their own safety, the other children are restricted from using the communal garden when the child is there and is distressed.

This child did not settle into the main part of the home. He was moved into an area that is not suitable for his needs. This area was not intended as a home for him and has not been adapted to meet his needs. In addition, the home's bathrooms are in a poor state of repair. There are plans to refurbish them, however, these have not yet been carried out.

In other ways, the children are progressing well. Staff make good use of a child's communication methods, which has helped him to interact more positively and, as a result, he is able to manage his frustrations better. Another child is able to make choices by using eye-pointing.

The children are encouraged to discuss their emotions. The use of short stories that describe social situations and a mood board on display in the communal areas have been effective.

All children are accessing education. One child does not have a school placement, despite the efforts of the registered manager to secure this for him. He is, however, home schooled by a tutor. Another child attends education at a farm. He enjoys this experience, which is positive for him. The other children attend local schools and are making good social and developmental progress.

The staff build good relationships with the children's family members, when this is appropriate. One parent is actively involved in agreeing and supporting her child's activities.

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

One child has made allegations of physical harm against staff. The staff concerned have continued working with the children while the matter is investigated. They do not work on their own with the child, however, a risk assessment was not completed to give clarity about expectations in regard to protecting the child from harm or the staff from further allegation.

Incidents involving children have reduced overall. However, the practice of the home is to ensure, when possible, that physical intervention is not used when a child is on the floor. If this should happen, the guidance states that the records need to be reviewed by the positive behaviour support trainer. Senior managers were unable to evidence that this had been done. This is a missed opportunity to evaluate and analyse the methods used to ensure safe care and best practice.

On occasion, the staff manage children's behaviours by holding doors so that a door cannot be opened by other children or, on occasion, by locking doors. This is not an approved method of intervention and not in line with the ethos of the home. This practice has been addressed at team meetings recently by the positive behaviour trainer and registered manager, to stop this method being used.

The recording systems for important information regarding the care and safety of children are not well organised. For example, each child has a daily care guide, together with a positive behaviour support plan. There are also two risk assessments and additional care plans in place. All relevant documents are not always updated following incidents. This creates a risk that important information to inform children's care could be missed.

A medical error was swiftly identified and action taken to seek medical advice. The home's policies and procedures were followed. The medical template was improved to provide additional information and learning was shared in the team meeting.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leaders and managers have not been effective in ensuring that a child living at the home has been suitably placed. Concerns about his quality of care have been identified, however, there have been delays in rectifying this. This has had an impact on the child and the other children living at the home.

A safeguarding issue was reported to the registered manager by the child, however, this was not accurately reported to the local authority designated officer. This undermines the ability for external professionals to respond appropriately. This was rectified during the inspection.

Agency staff are used to care for one child living at the home. There is good liaison between the registered manager and the professional team around the child, including the agency managers. However, the agency staff are not trained in line with the other staff working at the home. The agency staff use different techniques and models of care. They do not offer the same nurturing approach used by other staff in the home. While the registered manager has measures in place to support the agency staff they are supervised by managers from the agency. The registered manager has not requested the supervision notes to ensure she has satisfactory oversight of their experience of their practice and development.

The integration of staff from another of the organisation's homes has been well

managed. Staff have chosen to work here. They have skills in therapeutic working. The registered manager ensured that they had a good induction into the home. They are shadowing more experienced staff in the complex healthcare of the children before they manage children's diabetes or gastrostomy feeds.

Leaders and managers have acted on concerns about staff conduct or when care plans have not been followed. They have ensured that the appropriate action has been taken. Any lessons learned have been shared with staff to minimise the chance of a reoccurrence.

The identified shortfalls in leadership and management are viewed against the backdrop of positive relationships with children, who make progress at this home.

was child parents reported by the child however

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— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i))	30 July 2023
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— 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)) In particular, ensure that risk assessments are completed following allegations and physical interventions are reviewed and implemented in line with agreed policies.	30 July 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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; 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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(d)(h)) In particular, ensure that management monitoring of safeguarding concerns ensures that agreed child protection procedures are followed.	30 July 2023
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a))	30 July 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: 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: Kathy Marriott

Registered manager: Charlotte De Retuerto

Inspector

Suzy Lemmy, Social Care Inspector

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