

SC031698

Registered provider: East Sussex County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority children's home. The home can provide care for up to eight children with learning and physical disabilities.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since June 2017 and is suitably qualified.

There were two children living in the home at the time of the inspection. Since the last inspection, no children have moved into or out of the home.

For the purpose of this report, the manager has asked for children to be referred to as 'young people' due to their ages.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 May 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: 24 January 2023

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
24/01/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
11/10/2022	Full	Inadequate
16/09/2021	Full	Good
16/01/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

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

Young people receive bespoke and individualised care from a multi-disciplinary team involving permanent and non-permanent staff. This team consists of permanent care staff supported by temporary staff, including registered health nurses, healthcare assistants and care staff.

Despite this combination of staff, there is an exceptional working knowledge of how best to look after the young people. All staff, regardless of their role, have been able to demonstrate this. Subtle nuances of care are well known and shared with all staff, and there is a real sense of pride in the way the young people respond.

One young person requires a level of care that far exceeds the expectations of a children's home and what the home is set up to do. This has been further compounded by the young person experiencing a mental health crisis earlier in the year. The young person is currently cared for on a six to one staff-to-young-person ratio that includes a range of permanent staff, mental health nurses and healthcare assistants. Following a hospital assessment, it has been identified that the needs of this young person mean that they require long-term adult care provision. This provision has not yet been identified or accessed.

Staff are doing all they can to support this young person despite the challenges they face. This has meant that for both young people living in the home, progress has been made since the last inspection.

Both young people engage in education. One young person has a tutor they go to, and the other young person has a tutor who sees them at the home. Although the young people's engagement in this is varied, the attempts by staff are consistent in supporting young people to engage in education. Outside of tutor time, staff are committed to providing educational activities to help the young people to continue to learn.

Both young people have developed some independence skills in line with their own understanding, and they continue to be challenged to develop skills where they can.

Parents confirm that communication from the home is good, and any concerns are quickly shared. Parents feel like they are a part of the decisions relating to the day-to-day care needs of the young people.

Young people's views are captured in a variety of ways. There are feedback forms for things like bedrooms, the environment and food. Alongside this, there are regular cultural celebration evenings to expand young people's knowledge of culture and religion, and feedback is consistently sought regarding this.

The arrangements for one young person, whose liberty has had to be restricted for the safety of himself and others, have been considered. An application has been made to the court to formalise these arrangements, and this is being kept under constant review.

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

Risks for the young people are well understood by staff. Leaders have ensured that there is a comprehensive process that helps staff to understand and minimise levels of risk. This is achieved through general risk assessment principles, which are further supplemented by risk assessments for individual activities. The knowledge of staff is evident when looking at these assessments, as staff are aware of all nuances of need and are provided with clear guidance on what they need to do.

Young people do not go missing from the home. This is due to a combination of clear, developed strategies and high staffing ratios. If a young person were to go missing, there is a detailed plan in place.

Consistent behaviour strategies have resulted in a reduction in the number of physical interventions in the home. When interventions do occur, there is good management oversight of them. The strategies that are in place for one young person have not been reviewed since they experienced a crisis. This is a missed opportunity to review the young person's strategy and to ensure that it remains fully effective.

Risk management plans and behaviour strategies are written in partnership with all other agencies working in the home and the dedicated behaviour support staff. This helps to ensure that there is comprehensive oversight and understanding of the young people's behaviour.

One allegation has occurred since the last inspection. This was appropriately managed, and the relevant safeguarding professionals were informed. However, the allegation was not notified to Ofsted in a timely way. This is because there is not a process in place for when notifications need to be made in the absence of the registered manager.

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

The home is run by an experienced, dedicated and passionate registered manager who has high aspirations for the young people, staff and herself. However, their ability to achieve these aspirations fully is limited because of the situation relating to the placement needs of one of the young people and the review of what the use of the home may be moving forward.

The registered manager has worked tirelessly with senior leaders for the best outcomes for young people in terms of placement planning. However, a lack of an

available 'next step' provision has impeded progress on this. This has resulted in the current complex care arrangements for one of the young people dominating the focus of the registered manager. This means that they have not been able to give the same focus to other areas of their role as they would like.

The registered manager is diligent about the need for the team around the child to be held to account to make sure they are providing the best they can. Regular professionals' meetings are held to ensure that current strategies remain relevant. When there are any concerns, whether about young people or staffing, these are immediately conveyed by the registered manager, who challenges others in relation to their responsibility to give the young people the very best opportunities.

Staff are consistently positive about the support they receive from managers. This extends beyond the permanent staff and includes the staff temporarily working in the home. Staff receive regular training and annual appraisals to ensure that they remain skilled professionals. They are also supported by regular supervision sessions that consider the impact their work has on them. However, there are some inconsistencies in the recording of supervision sessions. This includes uncertainty about what actions have been set and a lack of review of such actions at subsequent sessions.

All staff who work at the home are subject to robust recruitment procedures that ensure they are safe to work with young people.

The registered manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home. However, the challenges relating to suitable moving-on placements have made planning for the future of the home extremely difficult. This has also contributed to the registered manager's ability to reflect on what has happened regarding this situation. As a result, reports relating to the quality of care for the young people have not been submitted to Ofsted for over a year. At the time of the inspection, a report had been completed but not yet submitted to Ofsted.

External monitoring visits have continued to occur monthly, and the registered manager has had the opportunity to review the reports following the visits. However, these reports have not been sent to Ofsted. This was rectified during the inspection.

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 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 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; that arrangements are in place to— plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(a)(b)(iii))	30 June 2023
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— HMCI. (Regulation 44 (1) (7)(a))	30 June 2023
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed. (Regulation 45 (1) (4)(a))	30 June 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the behaviour management strategy is understood and applied at all times by staff, and it must be kept under constant review and revised where appropriate. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.34)
- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff receive supervision that allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the young people assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that there is a system in place where 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)

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: SC031698

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: East Sussex County Council

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

Responsible individual: Kathy Marriott

Registered manager: Shirin White

Inspector

Mark Newington, Social Care Inspector

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