

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 are two children currently living in the home. Since the last inspection, no children have moved into or out of the home.

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 January 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	requires improvement to be good
---	---------------------------------

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: 11 October 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/10/2022	Full	Inadequate
16/09/2021	Full	Good
16/01/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
02/10/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Since the last inspection, both children have remained living in the home. It has been acknowledged by managers and the local authority that this home is not the right environment to meet one child's complex needs, and notice has been served on his placement. Senior managers are working diligently with a multi-agency group of professionals to find the most appropriate next step for this child.

Children's experiences have begun to improve since the last inspection. For one child, this includes more-frequent access to the local community. However, the experiences for another child in the home have been impacted by a recent health crisis. Staff have been trying exceptionally hard to keep this child safe during this time, but they are not trained to manage or meet his complex needs, and the environment is not suitable. This has meant that the conditions for this child have had a detrimental impact on his well-being, safety and dignity.

Since the last inspection, new equipment and toys have been provided, and children have been able to enjoy new experiences. Children are encouraged to give their views on the new activities that they have tried. This has ranged from making T-shirts for national events to enjoying theme nights. The staff seek feedback from the children about what they have enjoyed or learned and would like to try again.

Staff at the virtual school have created a bespoke and meaningful education plan for the children, and their engagement in learning has improved as a result. For example, one child, who had not engaged in formal education for some time, is now attending twice-weekly sessions in a community venue. A plan to introduce their attendance at a forest school is under way.

The arrangements for one child, 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.

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

Improvements continue to be made to the children's environment. These improvements include redecoration and new soft furnishings, which are chosen with the children, as well as robust furniture to meet the particular needs of one child.

The registered manager is also attempting to make the environment more comfortable for one child with specialist needs. However, this home is not designed to meet those needs, and any attempts that are being made to change the environment and reduce risks are very limited in their impact.

The registered manager has taken sufficient action to safeguard the children following an allegation about a member of staff. Following this incident, the registered manager implemented a new policy and took action to address the conduct issue with the staff member and the shortfalls identified during the investigation process.

There has been one incident of a child requiring a physical intervention to be kept safe. The registered manager has reviewed this and undertaken the necessary discussions with staff regarding what may have led to this incident and any learning arising from it.

The registered manager made the decision to end one child's placement due to the staff in the home no longer being able to consistently keep this child, or themselves, safe, due to the child's significant risky behaviours. Multi-agency consultation was taking place between senior leaders during the inspection period.

The management team and staff continue to make great efforts to provide the safest environment for the child and themselves while a suitable specialist placement is being sought.

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

There is a dedicated and consistent staff team in place for the children. This includes the use of a specialist agency for one child and, more recently, the appointment of a registered mental health nurse to provide care and oversight for another child due to his current needs.

All staff have regular training. Recently, a review of one child's needs led to staff receiving bespoke training. Staff have regular supervision. The registered manager has undertaken staff appraisals, and these continue on a rolling programme.

Staff feel valued and supported by the management team. Their heroic efforts to care for one child who is currently in crisis, teamed with the tireless advocacy and dedication from the registered manager for both children, are to be commended. However, these children have lived in the home for too long. Senior leaders have not acted quickly enough to improve the lives of the children and provide a suitable environment where the children can flourish and enjoy a fulfilling life.

The registered provider has applied to vary the home's registration to ensure that the registration and the statement of purpose reflect the needs of the children for whom care is being provided.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— 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— treat each child with dignity and respect. (Regulation 6 (1)(b) (2)(iii))	10 March 2023
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require. (Regulation 10 (1)(a) (2)(c))	10 March 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 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; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(b)(d))	10 March 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) This requirement is carried over to allow sufficient time to implement the changes.	31 March 2023
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— manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and 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)(ii)(iii)) This requirement is carried over to allow sufficient time to implement the changes.	31 March 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: SC031698

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: Shirin White

Inspector

Sara Stoker, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023