

SC033174

Hampshire County Council

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five children aged between 10 and 17; 16 is the maximum age on admission. According to the home's statement of purpose, it offers residential care with therapeutic emphasis and multi-agency involvement, to help children to recover from experiences which have rendered them vulnerable and disrupted their primary relationships.

The manager was registered with Ofsted on 24 November 2017.

Inspection date: 16 February 2021

This monitoring visit

The home was inspected on 4 November 2020, and significant concerns were identified. Two compliance notices were issued, and a number of requirements were made following the visit. The due date for these notices was 13 December 2020. On 15 December 2020, a monitoring visit was undertaken. The compliance notices were not met and were therefore re-issued with a due date of 14 February 2021.

This monitoring visit took place to ascertain the extent of progress against the compliance notices and requirements.

Staff appropriately followed the COVID-19 guidance before allowing the inspectors full access to the home. There have been significant improvements in the home environment, which now presents as more homely and welcoming. The children chose some of the colour scheme and furniture in the home. One child told inspectors that they enjoyed 'being part of making the home better', evidencing that their views and wishes are acted on.

Staff have reintroduced shared mealtimes. This gives the children and staff an opportunity to communicate in a positive and informal environment and provides a routine for the children.

Children appear increasingly settled and happier. Negative interaction between the children has reduced over recent months, creating a more positive environment and leading to a reduction of notifiable incidents to Ofsted. Good interaction and mutual respect were seen in the relationships between senior staff and children. The new management arrangements are bringing some much-needed stability and structure in the context of a recent period of considerable instability. Children spoke positively about the current management team. The new management team provides clear guidance and expectations to the team. However, these changes are very recent and although leaders acknowledge the critical importance to the children of stability within the wider staff team, they have not yet achieved this. The provider is seeking to address this by recruiting staff to fill permanent posts.

There have been no further complaints by children since Ofsted's last visit. The young person's handbook is now child friendly, detailed and clear. Children know where to find a copy if they mislay the one that was given to them. A complaints flowchart was visible on the wall. This tells children that they can raise any concern if they wish. The independent visitor to the home also notes in their most recent report that relationships between staff and children have improved. This indicates that children are happier than they were previously.

Supervision is increasingly robust with all staff having received supervision during the month prior to this visit. However there continues to be a lack of reflective discussion about the impact of, for example, key work sessions on the children, or discussions about how to improve practice. Staff undertake relevant training, but in some cases this information is not recorded. When asked about a hypothetical scenario, a member of staff was not confident and lacked understanding about the roles and responsibilities of professionals in the event that a child discloses safeguarding concerns.

Senior managers have strengthened quality assurance processes. Although these arrangements are still being embedded, there are signs of improvement. Senior leaders have updated their action plan; however, this was not sent to Ofsted. It was provided to inspectors during the visit and it provides a clear account of positive changes being implemented and reviewed.

The temporary manager has compiled a plan that identifies priority areas for attention and is using this to oversee practice. This provides an additional layer of scrutiny and has enabled the manager to identify further shortfalls. For example, records do not always evidence positive work with children or include examples of their achievements and progress. This is a missed opportunity to highlight children's successes and achievements, and to show how direct work with children is helping them to learn and develop.

Inspectors reviewed the risk assessments and behaviour management plans for all children. Staff had clearly identified the risks and vulnerabilities of one child. They adapted their safety plan accordingly to respond to her presenting behaviours and identified level of concern. In some instances, the wording in risk assessments and plans is open to interpretation and lacks clarity for the staff. Managers have sent a revised behaviour management policy to all staff. Incident recording has improved, but this is yet to be fully embedded in daily practice or understood by staff at all levels. Although staff can describe how specific incidents are dealt with, some are less able to talk about the home's overall approach to behaviour management.

Inspectors reviewed documents that demonstrate the involvement of professionals from statutory agencies. The voice of the child was well represented by the member of staff attending a meeting. However, communication with the wider partnership, for example the local police community support officer, was not evident. This is a missed opportunity to work together with community partners to keep children safe.

The home is regularly reviewed by an independent visitor, providing an additional layer of scrutiny and oversight of the quality of care provided to children.

The improvements in risk assessments, children's views being listened to and acted on, and the improved condition of the home support the outcome that the compliance notice in relation to regulation 12 has been met. However, the second compliance notice issued under regulation 13 is considered not to have been met. This does not relate to the quality assurance of the home but rather constitutes an administrative failure to complete an action within the notice period. The notice will not be re-issued because the shortfall does not impact on the children, their welfare or their progress. The provider has made improvements in how the quality of care is reviewed and monitored in the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/10/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/05/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
06/02/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
20/08/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

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.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure individual adults in the home are engaged in the safeguarding culture of the home so they understand what they would need to do if they found other staff misusing or abusing their position to the detriment of the safety of the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.14)
- The registered person should ensure that the staff take the initiative in identifying others who must play a part for their children and engage with those relevant people proactively, advocating for the children in their care, for example, the local beat police officer or community support officer. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 12, paragraph 2.7)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC033174

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hampshire County Council

Registered provider address: Hampshire Council, 3rd Floor, Elizabeth II Court
North, The Castle, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 8UG

Responsible individual: John Stacey

Registered manager: Sarah Harris

Inspectors

Jill Sephton-Wright, Social Care Inspector
Pete Hylton, Regulatory Inspection Manager

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