

SC033174

Registered provider: Hampshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a local authority. The home provides care for up to five children aged between 10 and 17; 16 is the maximum age on admission.

The provider states in their statement of purpose that they offer residential care with therapeutic emphasis and multi-agency involvement, to help children and young people recover from experiences which have left them vulnerable and disrupted their primary relationships.

There is no registered manager.

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 April 2022

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children are not protected and their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded. The care and experiences of children are poor, and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 26 April 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/04/2021	Full	Good
30/10/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/05/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
06/02/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Significant and widespread failings in how well children are helped and protected and how the home is led and managed mean the home has been judged to be inadequate. As a result of these failings, Ofsted issued four compliance notices and a notice restricting accommodation following this inspection.

There are significant failures in the admissions process for this home. This is because senior leaders have directed that children must move into the home even when the manager has identified unsuitable matching that will have a negative impact on children.

The consequences of these decisions have been detrimental to the safety of children and others and have severely affected children's progress. Staff and managers state they are unable to manage children's conflicting behaviours safely when two of the children are together. Another child actively avoids being at the home due to the chaotic and threatening environment. Leaders accept that this child is not suitably placed. Despite this, senior leaders decided to admit a further child to the home on an emergency and temporary basis.

Children are not making sufficient progress. Since the previous inspection, the statement of purpose has been changed to reflect that children are accommodated on a short-term basis. This is to enable assessments of children's needs to take place and for appropriate long-term placements to be identified. However, leaders state that there have been difficulties in finding placements for children to move on to. These short-term arrangements have had a negative effect on children's feelings of security and resulted in them not being invested in their placements or engaged with the staff. Leaders state that the current statement of purpose is ineffective and is subject to review.

Furthermore, the home does not have a consistent or permanent staff team to ensure that children can build strong and trusting relationships. This further impacts on children, who are not benefiting from positive relationships or staff who act as role models.

The premises have been improved, with significant refurbishment. However, there have been regular serious incidents that resulted in extensive damage to the home. For example, eight windows were broken by children in one day. One child's bedroom smelled of cannabis and this had not been identified or dealt with by staff. A violent incident occurred the day before the inspection. Damage caused to a vacant bedroom door was so extensive the door was screwed shut while arrangements were made to repair the damage. Damage caused in the home is repaired promptly.

Staff encourage children to participate in education. Some children access education on some level. However, due to some children's chaotic daily routines, their educational progress is limited.

One child receives an in-depth multi-agency approach to help meet their complex emotional health needs. This approach has supported the child to make limited progress, but this has been undermined by the significant failings identified.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: inadequate

There are significant shortfalls in how children are helped and protected. Not all children feel safe in the home. This is because they say they feel pressured to behave in a certain way when other children are present.

Staff do not manage or deal effectively with the frequent, serious and dangerous incidents that occur in the home. These incidents include windows being smashed, eggs thrown at staff, incidents of racially abusive behaviour and violence towards staff. Some staff are off work due to injuries they have sustained during incidents, and some do not want to return to work. This has led to instability in the staff team and a reliance on agency staff to cover the staff absences.

The arrangements to manage children's risks are significantly poor. Children's risk management plans identify their known risks but fail to identify clear and effective strategies for how these risks can be reduced and managed. This means staff are not provided with clear guidance on how to deal with the complex needs and the high-risk behaviour children display.

Access to mobile phones and the internet, including social media apps, has not been managed effectively. This has resulted in children who are at high risk of sexual exploitation not being safeguarded effectively when they have been online.

Safeguarding procedures relating to the management of allegations do not keep children or staff safe. Staff do not demonstrate an understanding of the home's procedures regarding allegation management. Furthermore, leaders and managers do not have a consistent approach to monitoring allegations. This means that any immediate action that may be required could be delayed. For instance, staff told inspectors that a child had made an allegation against them during an incident. Managers were not aware of this allegation as they had not been informed by staff. This resulted in a delayed referral to the relevant safeguarding partners. This failure raises serious concerns, not only about staff understanding of safeguarding procedures but also about management oversight.

Restraint practice is poor. Permanent staff and agency staff use two different restraint models. This risks confusion between staff during incidents when children may need to be held. This may also cause confusion and uncertainty for children as they experience different techniques of restraint being used. The oversight of physical interventions is compromised, as the manager is not trained in both models of restraint being used by the staff.

Furthermore, incident reports relating to the use of physical restraint are not always reviewed, signed and fully completed by staff and managers. This has not been identified by internal monitoring. This means poor practice may go unchecked and means that some children's records are incomplete and opportunities for reflective practice are missed.

Staff do not challenge or address effectively the significant racially abusive behaviour displayed towards them by some children. This has resulted in racial abuse towards staff being systemic and normalised in the home. Children have not had the necessary input from staff and relevant professionals to help develop alternative strategies for resolving conflict, and for focused reflection on their behaviours and the impact they can have on others.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Ineffective leadership and management systems mean that children do not receive safe, consistent or effective care.

Management monitoring systems have failed to identify that staff are not suitably trained to meet the needs of the children and keep them safe and have failed to help and guide staff in effective professional practice. This is a repeated failing from the previous inspection.

Children are being cared for by staff who lack the relevant skills, experience and training to safely manage children's complex needs and behaviours. For instance, a child who is at risk of using ligatures was responded to by inexperienced and untrained staff. Ligature cutters are not easily accessible for staff, and some staff are not aware of where these tools are kept. Staff have not completed necessary training to respond to incidents involving the use of ligatures. This leaves children at potential risk.

Recently appointed staff have no experience of working in a residential setting or caring for older children. The number of inexperienced staff is higher than that of permanent and experienced staff. This is compounded by the significant inconsistencies in staff supervision. Some staff have received regular supervision and others have not had supervision for many months. In one instance, a staff member who was new to residential care had their first supervision four months after they joined the staff team. This does not provide staff with sufficient opportunity to discuss and develop their practice.

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that the regulator is informed of serious incidents involving children. For instance, the regulator was not notified when a child was admitted to hospital following a significant incident. This means that crucial information regarding safety of children and their lived experiences is not routinely shared. This results in external oversight of serious incidents being hindered.

Confidential and personal records of children are not always stored securely. This is because some staff send these records using their personal devices. Monitoring systems have failed to identify this.

Leaders have identified some areas for improvement, such as recruiting a new manager and staff and reviewing the statement of purpose. However, leaders and managers have failed to fully understand and address the strengths and weaknesses of the home. In particular, the significant failings in the admission processes, risk and behaviour management arrangements and the failings around staff competency. The Responsible Individual acknowledged that young people's safety and progress had been compromised by recent placement decision making and the difficulties of operating the home within the statement of purpose. This is being addressed with senior managers.

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— 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— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a))	30 June 2022
*The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;	5 June 2022

de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children; understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable. (Regulation 11 (1)(b) (2)(a)(iii)(iv)(xi)(xii))	
*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))	5 June 2022
*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— understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; that the effectiveness of the home’s child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v)(e))	5 June 2022
*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—	5 June 2022

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of 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)(c)(h))	
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 the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(d))	30 June 2022
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; that arrangements are in place to— manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(ii)(c))	30 June 2022

The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 16 (1) (3)(a) (5))	30 June 2022
Case records must be kept— securely in the children's home during the period when the child to whom the case records relate is accommodated there. (Regulation 36 (2)(c))	30 June 2022
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; (Regulation 35 (1)(a) (3)(a)(v)(vii)(b)(i)(ii))	30 June 2022

The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child — or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e))	5 June 2022
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*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: 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: Post vacant

Inspectors

Kelly Marchmont, Social Care Compliance Inspector
Jill Sephton-Wright, Social Care Inspector

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