

SC036240

Registered provider: Derby City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to six children and young people who need support with emotional and/or behavioural problems.

The manager has been registered since February 2019.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 10 February 2021, to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 November 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 15 April 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/04/2019	Full	Good
01/05/2018	Full	Outstanding
17/07/2017	Full	Good
20/12/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people receive a good standard of care from a dedicated staff team. When young people display extremely challenging behaviour, staff remain resilient and work in partnership with involved agencies to provide a consistently good standard of care.

Partner agencies and others reported that the staff go above and beyond in trying to meet young people's needs. They said that staff are good advocates for young people. This is commendable because some young people have challenging care needs. Staff meet these needs consistently and to a very good standard.

When young people are not in school, managers work closely with the local authority to provide education in the home. Young people receive the support of a teacher who is integrated into the care team. Plans are made to help young people transition back into a school, or another education provision, as soon as possible.

The manager makes sure that an independent advocate is appointed to work with those young people who are not seeing their families. This ensures that the young people's views, wishes and feelings are considered. Additionally, independent reviewing officers ensure that young people have the opportunity to attend relevant meetings and take an active role in their care planning. This means that young people are included in the decisions that affect their lives.

The home is a large building with substantial outside space. Young people benefit from well-appointed communal areas. They have good-sized bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms. Young people are encouraged by staff to keep their bedrooms clean and tidy. However, a shared bathroom has not been kept clean and tidy. The manager, staff and young people are planning for a wall to be professionally decorated by a well-known graffiti artist. This is an exciting prospect for young people, and demonstrates how young people are included in the development of their home.

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

Managers and staff take swift action to repair any damage caused to the home by young people. When damage does occur, managers take the right advice from involved professionals to ensure that the home remains safe and secure.

Managers and staff understand the complex and at times difficult behaviour displayed by young people. They have implemented strategies to stabilise and decrease more worrying behaviours. Staff remain steadfast in challenging unacceptable behaviour, while trying to help young people develop better ways to express their frustration and strong emotions without harming themselves, others or the environment.

Some situations can become challenging, but staff remain optimistic and enthusiastic about all the young people. They are good advocates. Staff say that some young people might benefit from living in a more specialised setting. However, the staff remain committed and resilient, and try their best to meet the young people's needs.

When young people go missing, staff follow risk assessments which detail the procedures that they must follow. Staff are proactive in searching for young people. Information-sharing between agencies takes place to support efforts to locate young people. When young people return home, they are cared for and supported by staff. The manager makes sure that statutory missing-from-care return interviews are offered to all young people. This helps the manager, staff and involved agencies to ascertain young people's whereabouts when they are away from the home.

Staff have not considered all the risks and vulnerabilities associated with young people to minimise potential harm. For example: one young person regularly smokes in their bedroom. This increases the overall risk to all the young people. However, work has taken place to heighten young people's awareness of the risks of smoking in the home. This has included inviting the fire service to speak about the risk. Staff have also addressed these concerns in key-working sessions. Routine fire drills take place.

Staff work proactively with young people. As a result, physical interventions are infrequent. When they occur, the manager undertakes an independent overview of the intervention. Young people are offered the opportunity to speak about the physical intervention, their feelings, behaviours and what could have been done differently. However, young people's plans are not always updated after these interviews.

The manager has not made sure that the vetting procedures for all new staff are sufficiently rigorous. Pre-employment checks are incomplete, and so safer recruitment procedures are not being fully implemented. This increases young people's vulnerability.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

This home is led by a manager who is thoughtful and places the welfare of young people at the centre of his work. He is registered with Ofsted and is well supported by an experienced deputy manager. They lead a stable and dedicated team. This leads to greater consistency of care.

Managers have a good understanding of young people's individual needs. The positive relationships with the local authority social workers mean that managers understand young people's histories and the reasons for them being in care. This assists managers in driving forward young people's plans to help them reach their full potential and overcome some adverse life experiences.

Managers have not always ensured that all staff have regular practice-based supervision. For some staff, there are significant gaps between supervision sessions. Managers have put interim measures in place, such as joint staff supervisions. However, at times of challenge and stress in the home, staff have not had sufficient opportunity to meet with a manager to reflect on their practice.

Managers ensure that the staff have access to regular training and developmental opportunities. During the COVID-19 pandemic many training courses have been conducted online. There is a slow but steady move back to face-to-face training. When staff identify a skills gap, managers ensure that this gap is filled through training and other learning opportunities.

When young people or their families have made complaints, managers have not investigated these complaints effectively and provided outcomes in a timely manner. This means that opportunities have been missed to learn from complaints in order to improve practice.

The managers acted quickly, meeting the statutory requirement and recommendation from the last inspection. However, following this inspection, four requirements have been made, together with three recommendations.

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 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(b)) This relates to potential risks associated with young people smoking in their bedrooms.	10 December 2021
Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must establish a procedure for considering complaints made by or on behalf of children. The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. The registered person must supply to HMCI, at HMCI's request, a statement containing a summary of any complaints made during the preceding twelve months and the action that was taken in response to each complaint. (Regulation 39 (1) (3) (5)) This relates to complaints made by families of young people not being investigated.	10 December 2021
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or	10 December 2021

if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d)) This relates to insufficient employment checks for new staff.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (b)) This relates to staff not having regular team meetings and formal supervision with a manager.	10 December 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children, and that the home is a homely, domestic environment. The children's home must comply with relevant health and safety legislation (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, the home should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should support staff to be ambitious for every child in the home and to gain skills and experience that enable them to actively support each child to achieve their potential. The registered person should ensure that staff can understand and meet each child's needs, in line with their responsibilities, and the registered person themselves needs to have a high level of understanding of the needs of the children in their care. ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.5)
- The registered person should ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and the placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risk on a day-to-day basis. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

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: SC036240

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Derby City Council, Corporation Street, Derby DE1 2FE

Responsible individual: Sharon Green

Registered manager: Simeon Howell

Inspector

Simon Hunter, Social Care Inspector

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