

# SC037588

Registered provider: Portsmouth City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

In accordance with the home's statement of purpose, the home provides care for up to six children with learning and/or physical disabilities. The home is owned and managed by the city council. It provides short breaks from Tuesdays to Sundays.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since April 2013.

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.

### Inspection dates: 26 and 27 January 2022

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

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

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

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 11 March 2020

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 11/03/2020      | Full            | Outstanding             |
| 14/02/2019      | Full            | Good                    |
| 20/09/2017      | Full            | Good                    |
| 28/03/2017      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children benefit from a staff team who have worked together for a long time. The familiarity of faces helps the children to feel relaxed when they stay. It also allows for relationships to be built over a sustained period, meaning the children are able to form trusting and protective relationships with the adults who care for them.

When children first arrive at the home, the staff support them to explore their new surroundings and try activities at a pace suited to their needs. The staff make the children, and their families, feel welcome and include their thoughts and wishes into individual care planning arrangements. One child is currently enjoying visiting for mealtimes before having their first overnight stay. This helps the child build foundations with the staff and become familiar with the environment before having a first night away from the family home.

The environment is well maintained, bright, child-friendly and contains a range of equipment to meet individual needs. There is a wide range of resources, creatively used by staff, that encourage and support the development of life skills through play. However, the outside areas of the home are not as well maintained. The registered manager has secured funding from the local authority and has started consultation with contractors. There is also an old, and unused, hospital bed in one of the largest bedrooms that needs replacing. These shortfalls detract from the otherwise homely feel.

The children's views and wishes are ingrained into everyday practice. The staff are quick to ensure that a child is heard and their preference is met. Children are encouraged and supported to use their preferred system of communication. This approach comes naturally and really shows the positive and warm relationships between children and staff. This helps the children to continue to use their communication skills with others outside the home and reinforces continuity of what is taught in school.

Children are able to communicate their choices and move between activities successfully. This is because staff ensure that children's routines are clear and there is routine, structure and predictability.

There is a real sense of family and togetherness at this home. The staff encourage the children to sit and eat at the table together every mealtime. The staff ask the children about their day and encourage them to give feedback on the food they are eating. The children are given several options of different drinks, seating arrangements and alternatives to make dinner time a fun and comfortable experience for everyone. The staff sensitively remind the children following a meal how to help tidy up. One child did this independently. This is because of the staff's systematic approach to boundaries and routines.

The staff attend the children's regular education reviews. When key workers feel the children's education targets can be further supported in the home, they include this in their care plans. The staff are clear in their understanding that this way of working helps the children to achieve more quickly. This consistent approach means that the children are progressing in school and at the home.

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

The children are comfortable and settled in the environment when they stay. The staff have a good understanding of their individual needs and work closely with parents and carers to meet these. The staff have clear boundaries about what is safe and acceptable and support the children with unwavering patience and respect. The staff intuitively understand the children's needs and guide them with reassurance to understand the root causes of their upset or distress. As a result, there have been no physical interventions with children since the home's last inspection.

Any concerns about the safety and welfare of children are diligently recorded and acted upon. There is effective liaison with parents, carers and allocated social workers. The staff understand the children's individual vulnerabilities and the plans around them to protect them from harm. The staff are confident in processes to follow should they be concerned for a child's safety or well-being.

Visual symbols inform the children what they should do if the fire alarm sounds. This helps the children to see and understand what is expected of them each time the fire alarm sounds. The registered manager is in the process of working towards the home's first night-time drill.

There are weaknesses in how staff are safely recruited. For example, there are unexplored gaps in employment histories and a failure to verify information as required. The local authority's system does not allow for the registered manager to have full oversight of the process.

The review of premises needs reviewing in line with regulation. The document does not make clear how identified risks will be reduced in light of known information.

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

Despite the effects of the pandemic, the service has continued to support families, even when it was closed for five months. The staff remained in telephone contact with families during this time to offer their support. This was positive for families and helped with continuity as the home started reopening.

The home currently opens from Tuesdays to Sundays for children and their families. The registered manager has an agreed action plan with senior leaders to increase this to seven nights a week. This means that the home will be able to support more children and families and increase nights for individual children as and when needed.

The registered manager and the staff welcome the changes and look forward to welcoming more children.

The registered manager knows many of the home's strengths and the areas that need to improve. However, some aspects of monitoring are not strong. For example, during the admission's process, staff have failed to identify that a prescribed controlled medication is needed by a child. Consequently, no consideration has been made with regards to its storage, administration or any additional training that may be necessary for the staff. This child has not yet stayed at a time when the medication is needed, therefore nothing untoward has occurred. However, this omission demonstrates flaws in the current care planning and monitoring processes.

The staff say they receive supervision regularly and feel valued and listened to. However, it is noted by managers that supervisions and appraisals have fallen behind since the reopening of the home.

The provider is moving to electronic recording. However, some of the staff are still using children's paper files and folders and this means that they are not referring to, or working from, the most up-to-date plans for children. This hinders staff's ability to complete effective plans for the children and to understand what life is like for them outside of this home.

The provider has systems in place to notify the manager about the training needs of staff. However, the registered manager's own systems for monitoring staff training are ineffective. Records are not updated and the system does not allow for easy review. The registered manager has raised these issues with senior leaders.

The registered manager completes timely quality of care reviews. These demonstrate clear developments in the home and include tangible actions moving forward. However, reports lack the direct feedback and opinions of the children, their families and allocated social workers. This is a missed opportunity to show the children and their families that their views and opinions are valued and acted on.

## 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   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>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.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(h))</p> <p>In particular, the registered manager needs to ensure he has effective systems for the monitoring and review of staff training.</p> | 1 May 2022 |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>undertake appropriate continuing professional development;</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and</p> <p>have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year.<br/>(Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 1 May 2022 |
| <p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children's home; or</p> <p>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,</p> <p>if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p>                                                                            | 1 May 2022 |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>the individual is of integrity and good character;</p> <p>the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;</p> <p>the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and</p> <p>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)(a)(b)(c)(d))</p> <p>In particular, the registered manager must have full access to and oversight of all recruitment checks for staff.</p>                                   |                   |
| <p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c))</p> <p>In particular, the registered manager must ensure that children's health/ medication needs are fully understood and that the staff are using the most up-to-date plans for children as directed and agreed by the child's placing authority, families/carers and education providers.</p> | <p>1 May 2022</p> |
| <p>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.</p> <p>In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p> <p>the quality of care provided for children;</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>1 May 2022</p> |

the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and

any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.

After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report").

The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.  
(Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c)(3)(5))

## Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all areas of the children's home are homely, domestic and not institutional in appearance. This specifically refers to the removal of the old hospital bed. ('Guide to the children's home regulations, including quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. Providers should refer to the non-statutory advice about the location assessment process, 'Children's homes regulations amendments 2014'. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

## 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:** SC037588

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Portsmouth City Council

**Registered provider address:** Portsmouth City Council, Civic Offices, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth PO1 2EA

**Responsible individual:** Peter Murphy

**Registered manager:** Clive Pfeiffer-Richardson

## Inspector

Kelly Monniot, 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 children looked after, 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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2022