

SC037762

Registered provider: Portsmouth City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a local authority and is registered to provide care for up to five children who may experience social and emotional difficulties. There were four children living in the home at the time of this inspection.

There is no registered manager in post.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2023

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: 19 May 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/05/2022	Full	Good
27/04/2021	Full	Good
11/03/2020	Full	Inadequate
03/01/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are supported by friendly, patient and caring staff. Staff ensure that the care given to children is individualised and in line with their needs. One child said, 'I like living here, mostly my bedroom.'

The quality of the matching process before children move into the home has been mixed. In most cases, the manager and staff ensure that careful consideration is given to the existing children and the needs of the new children. However, on one occasion, the matching of one child was not carefully considered.

Children are supported with their educational needs. Where children struggle to attend and engage in school, staff and managers work collectively with education placements to identify home-based tutorials suitable for children's needs. School placements are sourced for children who have recently moved into the home. This helps children to return to school and understand the importance of education to their future.

Staff use creative and child-centred approaches to capture children's views and wishes. They hold daily natural discussions, structured key-work sessions and care plan focused discussions with children. The sessions are well documented and illustrate the good level of reflective conversations between staff and the children. Staff are honest and use a non-shaming approach which allows children to share their thoughts. Therefore, children feel listened to and valued.

Children attend a variety of enjoyable activities. Staff help children to identify activities and support them to attend these individually or with their friends. These include visits to London, music concerts, water sports and shopping. At home, children enjoy activities such as artwork and playing online games. Their active lives help them to stay physically fit and positively stimulated.

Children are supported to develop independence skills in preparation for adult life. They have developed skills to travel independently. One child is completing an independence programme that is focused on developing their self-care, budgeting and managing health skills. Another child has developed confidence, resilience and positive social skills. These new skills help children to feel empowered and more confident about their journey to adulthood.

Children live in a clean and well-maintained home. The communal areas are nicely decorated and feel homely and welcoming. One child's bedroom is decorated with personal items of her choice. However, the room smells of cigarette smoke, which compromises the fire safety in the home and the child's health.

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

Staff prioritise the safety of children. The manager holds discussions regarding keeping children safe in staff meetings, supervision sessions and handovers. Assessments are regularly reviewed by staff, social workers and other agencies to ensure an integrated approach to the safeguarding of children. Staff engage in well-structured key-work sessions where they talk to children about risks and their impact. This helps children learn better ways to keep themselves safe.

Children's health needs are met. However, children present a dependency on smoking cannabis. Staff and managers work closely with external agencies, such as child and adolescent mental health services and drug rehabilitation services, to support children to understand the effects of drugs misuse on their health and social life. Staff engage in extensive discussions with children, carry out regular room searches and are highly vigilant when they suspect drugs misuse. This has improved children's understanding of the effects drugs can have on their lives.

Some children go missing from home. Staff adhere to clear safety plans and work closely with external agencies, such as the police and local hotels, to ensure that children are located and returned home safely. Staff and the social workers engage in discussions with children on their return. Children are made aware of risks in the local area and are encouraged to access places in a planned and safe manner while maintaining contact with staff.

Children are well informed of the home rules and guidelines. When children struggle to manage their feelings and emotions, staff use calm parenting approaches to support children to calm. Children are also given space to self-soothe and reflect on their behaviours independently. Discussions are held with children on how to communicate their feelings in a more positive manner. Incidents are clearly recorded; however, there is no record of the manager's oversight of these incidents.

Leaders and managers do not always adhere to best practice when recruiting staff. The key suitability checks are carried out but records of other checks, such as interview records, are not easily accessible on the organisation's electronic system. This affects the registered manager's ability to ensure that all required checks are in place.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is working through his resignation process, and he led this inspection. Recruitment for a new manager is underway.

The home is led by an ambitious management team that has a clear vision on the standard of care required for children. Leaders and managers share this vision with a committed team of staff who promote a positive and warm culture in the home. One member of staff said, 'We have a good manager and deputy manager who are positive and supportive.'

Leaders, the manager and staff use effective tools to track progress made by children. Designated key workers complete monthly reports which identify children's experiences, progress, achievements and areas of developments. Reward charts are used with some children to help them visually track their own progress and take pride in their achievements.

Staff and managers receive regular and effective supervision and appraisals. Leaders and managers have reviewed the supervision policy and implemented new tracking and recording systems to ensure that regular and effective supervision is now provided to staff. Protected time and reflective space makes staff feel listened to and valued.

Managers and staff share positive relationships with children, families and professionals. Structured plans are made to ensure that children remain in regular contact with their families. Where relationships are strained, staff work closely with parents and children to ensure that positive contact is implemented and maintained. Families and social workers are consulted when concerns arise, which ensures positive resolution for children.

The manager and staff promote equality, diversity, gender and religion effectively. One child is provided with hair and skin care products in line with their cultural background. Another child is supported with their gender identity. Children are kind to each other and treat peers with respect.

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 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— 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)) In particular, ensure that the manager has oversight of incident records.	31 July 2023
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's homes 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— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii))	31 July 2023

If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(1) applies to the home— paragraph (1) does not apply; and the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(a)(b))	31 July 2023
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Recommendations

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. In particular, when assessing the impact that a new admission may have, ensure that there is sufficient analysis and evaluation of the information that has been provided during the referral process. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The registered person should ensure that good employment practice is maintained, as set out in regulations 31 to 33. They must ensure that proper recruitment processes are followed when vetting potential employees. They must also ensure that records that are kept electronically can be easily accessed when required by anyone with a legitimate need to view them. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: SC037762

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Sam Bushby

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Alphie Khumalo, Social Care Inspector
Sasha Reid, Social Care Inspector

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