

SC037762

Registered provider: Portsmouth City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The local authority operates this home. The home is now registered to care for up to five children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The aim of the home is to provide stable and consistent care to children in need of medium- to long-term placements.

The registered manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2011.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 4 November 2020 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on our website.

Inspection dates: 27 to 28 April 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: 11 March 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

At the assurance visit in September 2020, serious and widespread concerns were identified and a compliance notice was issued. This was in relation to how the risk of

harm was managed in the home. The purpose of the subsequent monitoring visit in November 2020 was to ascertain whether the compliance notice had been met. This was found to be met and no further compliance activity was needed.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/03/2020	Full	Inadequate
03/01/2019	Full	Good
19/10/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
06/06/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people benefit from living in this home. Warm and caring relationships, which in some cases have developed over a number of years, help the young people to feel valued and respected. One young person said: 'Here are the most supportive people I've been with and I have been in several foster placements. It's chill.'

Since the assurance visit in September 2020, young people have become more invested and engaged in the running of the home. They participate more actively in meetings with the staff and their peers and they have also been on holiday together. These are significant improvements in relation to developing a cohesive and inclusive culture.

The home has undergone extensive internal refurbishment. Young people's views have been central in this progress and they have been able to influence the decor. This has had the impact of making the home well looked after and comfortable. It has also shown the young people that their views are taken seriously and valued.

The home has a large garden which is very well maintained by a member of staff. The appearance of the outside of the home is undermined by the presence of smoking detritus by the front door and around the side of the house. A recommendation is made that the managers and staff address this issue.

There is a large open garden at the front of the house. Members of the public occasionally use this as a shortcut to a nearby pathway. This shows a lack of respect for the young people's privacy. Despite attempts by members of staff and managers to deal with this, the problem is ongoing and a requirement is therefore made that this issue is addressed more effectively.

Young people's education is promoted and valued. Members of staff have been very effective in supporting young people to attend and benefit from education. They have advocated strongly for them so that continuity of their education placements is maintained, even when the young people are struggling to attend or engage.

There is an emphasis on preparing young people to move on to independence. The main drive of the home is to enable the young people to take responsibility and develop their self-care skills with a view to living independent adult lives. Each young person has an individual programme, which is developed at a rate with which they can cope and in which they are also invested. This helps them to feel that they have an influence in the direction their lives are taking.

A strength of the home is the continued support offered to young people once they have left the home. This sustains relationships and reassures the young people that they have someone they can turn to for help and advice even after they have left.

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

Young people benefit from being cared for by staff who have a very good understanding of their vulnerabilities and strengths. Staff know how to support the young people to manage risks and keep themselves safe.

All members of staff know what to do and who to inform if they have concerns about a young person's welfare. This knowledge is put into practice. There is clear and prompt communication with external agencies, such as social workers and the police, if there are concerns which need to be addressed. This means that plans can be implemented effectively to ensure that young people's safety is promoted and protected.

Members of staff know the procedures to follow if a young person goes missing from the home. Young people and staff gave explicit verbal explanations to inspectors as to what steps are followed should this occur. However, written protocols for the young people are generic and not specific for each young person. Although this has not impacted on the safety of young people, this information needs to be more explicit in their individual plans.

Other risk assessments are very clear as to what steps and strategies members of staff need to take to keep young people safe. These risk assessments are shared with other professionals for perusal and comment. This ensures that there is a shared multidisciplinary approach to keeping young people safe.

There is an emphasis on building positive relationships so that any issues or challenges for the young people can be explored and addressed. This means that there is a drive to resolve conflict and challenges through dialogue and restorative discussions rather than by using sanctions. This approach encourages respect and tolerance for each other.

While all members of staff are trained in the use of restraint, there have been no incidents of physical intervention since the assurance visit in September 2020. Staff understand what individual strategies need to be used to support young people when they are distressed or angry and this means incidents can be resolved at a low level and without the need for physical intervention.

There is a clear drive from all members of staff and the young people to ensure that bullying is not accepted. The staff team and managers have taken decisive action when bullying has occurred, in order that everyone feels safe and respected.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good.

The registered manager has been absent since July 2020 and an interim manager is in place.

The interim manager and the staff team have shown considerable commitment to ensuring that the young people have received consistent care and support.

There is a well-established group of staff who know the needs and vulnerabilities of the young people in their care. All members of staff are trained and knowledgeable around how to provide the support that these young people need in order for them to be kept safe and to make progress.

All members of staff report good levels of support from peers and managers. They receive regular supervision to ensure that their practice is assessed and that any issues are considered and addressed. This helps them to reflect on their roles and to account for their standard of conduct and the quality of their work.

The interim manager is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of this home. He has implemented plans that have improved the quality of the environment, has increased participation of young people in the running of the home and has scrutinised records to ensure that they are accurate and professionally presented.

The recording of the administration of medication and the auditing of dosage are difficult to follow at times, especially when young people are absent from the home. This is acknowledged by the interim manager and, although no young people have come to harm, there is the potential for medication administration to be compromised. A recommendation is made to improve the recording and auditing of medication.

The interim manager and staff communicate effectively with all stakeholders. Feedback from parents, social workers and education staff is positive about the open communication achieved and the sense that everyone is working together to improve outcomes for the young people.

Members of staff and managers advocate strongly on behalf of the young people. This has been particularly effective in ensuring that their education has been promoted and their placements maintained even when the young people have been struggling. These efforts have been appreciated by the young people and have served to strengthen the trust and relationships between them and the staff team.

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 registered person must ensure that—the privacy of children is appropriately protected. (Regulation 21 (a))	30 June 2021
In particular, ensure that members of the public do not use the front garden as a shortcut.	

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulation including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person must specify the procedures to be followed and the roles and responsibilities of staff when a child is missing from care or away from the home without permission and how staff should support the child on return to the home. In particular, ensure that protocols are individually designed for each child rather than being generic. ('Guide to the children's homes regulation including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.28)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. In particular, ensure that the recording of medication storage and auditing is clearer and easier for staff and managers to monitor. ('Guide to the children's homes regulation including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: Sarah Daly

Registered manager: Calvin George

Inspectors

Paul Taylor, Social Care Inspector
Mark Newington, Social Care Inspector

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