

SC037910

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. It provides care and accommodation for up to four children. Its aim is to help children recover from experiences which have caused them to be vulnerable and disrupted their primary relationships.

The registered manager position has been vacant since June 2021.

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 9 September 2020 to carry out monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 July 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 15 May 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/05/2018	Full	Outstanding
09/10/2017	Full	Good
21/03/2017	Full	Good
21/09/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Since the previous inspection, a new model of care has been introduced and remains in its early stages. The outreach service is not fully staffed. This has an impact on the new service. Children are not supported by informed and confident staff, in relation to the new model of care.

Some children have only lived for short periods at the home because staff have not been successful in supporting them with their mental health needs. Staff work well with other agencies involved in children's lives and this ensures effective oversight of children's care plans. If children can no longer live in the home, the children are informed and are supported to understand the reasons why they cannot stay. Empathic staff support children when moving to their new homes which promotes positive endings for children moving on.

Staff provide child-centred care and support. For example, staff visited a child when they were in hospital. Staff also kept in contact with a child who was experiencing a very difficult episode in their life away from the home. These examples demonstrate that staff provide children with consistent support through significant life events.

Staff place a strong emphasis on celebrating educational progress. A child with no previous attendance in education is now engaging in learning with staff in the home. As a result, the child is now looking forward to eventually returning to mainstream school. This will increase the child's opportunity to make friends, build on social skills and improve life chances when older.

Although staff and managers talk to children, there is a significant gap in recording children's wishes and views. Children are not given access to a children's guide. Additionally, they have nothing to refer to regarding how to make a complaint. As a result, this leaves children in a vulnerable position as they may not know how to access advocacy or make a complaint about the care they are receiving. However, one child said he would speak to different staff members if he was concerned or unhappy.

Children do not receive regular and purposeful key-work sessions. The lack of direction within these sessions means that children are not supported to understand their life story and care experiences.

The physical environment of the home is safe and secure. The home is clean, tidy and appropriately furnished. However, the home lacks homely items such as photographs or artwork on the walls.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Staff do not always familiarise themselves with risk assessments. This lack of familiarity with an assessment led to an incident with one child. This placed the child at increased risk. Members of the public and staff were left in a vulnerable situation that required police attendance.

Staff recognise and celebrate the children's positive behaviours. Staff are effective at de-escalating tensions and restraint is used infrequently. However, records of physical intervention are poor. These records do not identify debriefs with children or have a restorative focus. This means that children do not have the opportunity for reflection or to gain a sense of personal responsibility.

Records of self-harm are not completed accurately and do not always show that children are offered medical attention or first aid. This lack of accurate recording means that the records do not demonstrate whether children get the immediate help required after an incident of self-harm.

Professionals praised staff in their ability to share comprehensive and ongoing concerns regarding a child's emotional and physical well-being. This speeded up the move of one child, to another setting that was identified as more suitable to meet the child's complex needs.

Risk assessments and planning do not always reflect significant risks that are evident. The location risk assessment does not identify those risks in the community. Additionally, individual risk assessments do not take this into consideration. As a result, children who experience mental health issues are potentially exposed to a higher risk of harm because measures to reduce risk are not identified.

Fire safety issues were identified during this inspection. The provider rectified these immediately. However, these shortfalls had not been identified by internal management monitoring.

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

The registered manager post is vacant. Recruitment is taking place to fill this role.

There are no monitoring or quality assurance systems in place. Leaders and managers do not know the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Records do not show what progress children are making. Training and recruitment records are not clear. There is delay in ensuring that all new staff meet the necessary requirements. For example, short gaps in previous employment have not been explored. This means that leaders and managers do not have effective systems in place to ensure that a good standard of care is consistently delivered to children.

Inductions of new staff are completed; however, these are generic in recording and

do not provide any reflection or guidance for staff in their probation period. Not all staff have received annual appraisals. Supervision for staff has improved and there is evidence of wider discussion taking place. However, there is no discussion with staff regarding the new model of care. As a result, some staff are confused and unable to articulate what outcome they want to achieve in relation to children's care planning.

Some staff report that they are not clear on the home's current statement of purpose or changes in their role specification and job title. Therefore, staff are not able to acknowledge consistency and stability. As a result, children may experience an environment of low morale amongst staff, and conflicting responses to their care planning.

There have been occasions when the manager delayed the reporting of serious incidents to Ofsted. This compromises the regulator's ability to oversee safeguarding practice in the home in a timely way. However, staff take appropriate action to safeguard children when there is an incident.

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 children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— develop positive relationships with them; engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child; regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care; ensure that each child— has access to the home's children's guide, and the home's complaints procedure, when the child's placement in the home is agreed and throughout the child's stay in the home; ensure that staff— keep the children's guide and the home's complaints procedure under review and seek children's comments before revising either document; ensure that an explanation is given to each child as soon as	8 October 2021

reasonably practicable after the child's arrival about— the children's guide; how to make a complaint or representations in relation to the home or the care the child receives and how any such complaint or representations will be dealt with; and what advocacy support or services are available to the child, how the child may access that support or those services and any entitlement the child may have to independent advocacy provision. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)(b)(ii)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(iii))	
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 premises used for the purposes of the home are located so that children are effectively safeguarded. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(c))	8 October 2021
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; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(h))	8 October 2021
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review, and where appropriate revise it. (Regulation 16 (3)(a))	8 October 2021

The registered person must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home. This relates to the continued absence of the registered manager and the requirement to have a registered manager in day-to-day charge of the home. An application to register a manager in the interim period is required. (Regulation 27 (1)(a))	8 October 2021
The registered person must ensure that— within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(c))	8 October 2021
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 — is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); 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)(i)(ii)(e))	8 October 2021
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). (Regulation 46 (1))	8 October 2021

This relates to the consideration of all risks in the local area including access to motorways and bridges.	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all staff acknowledge the importance of understanding and responding to the child's lived experience of care. In particular, the use of planned and structured key-work sessions to explore this. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 21, paragraph 4.3)
- The registered person should ensure that if a child makes a choice that would place them or another person at significant risk of harm, staff assist them to understand the risks and manage their risk taking behaviour to keep themselves and others safe. In particular, ensure that staff are familiar with the most recent risk assessment. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.7)
- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should detail the processes and agreed timescales for staff to achieve induction, probation and any core training (such as safeguarding, health and safety and mandatory qualifications); detail the process and timescales for supervision of practice (see regulation 33 (4)(b)) and keep appropriate records for staff in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should ensure that good employment practice is maintained. They must ensure that recruitment and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

- The registered person should ensure that for the children's home to be a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: SC037910

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Jill Sephton-Wright, Social Care Inspector
Sara Stoker, Social Care Inspector

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