

SC037910

Registered provider: Hampshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and run by a local authority and provides care for up to two children. At the time of the inspection, two children were living in the home.

The registered manager has been in post since March 2022.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 November 2024

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: 12 April 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/04/2023	Full	Good
21/11/2022	Full	Inadequate
30/08/2022	Full	Inadequate
31/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

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

Children attend part-time education, which is in line with their plans. When children are not attending school, there are no clear plans for staff to support them with educational activities. Where educational activities are recorded, there are numerous gaps, and a lack of management oversight means that progress is not monitored, and children may not achieve their educational potential.

Children's views are routinely sought. However, when reasonable requests are made, they are not always agreed by leaders and managers. Children in the home have asked for activities such as paintball and going to a rage room, and they have requested items such as punchbags, basketball hoops and football goals. All of these have been turned down. One child requested a bike, and four months later he still does not have this.

Children are not sufficiently encouraged to personalise their bedrooms, which means that the walls of their rooms are sometimes bare. One child has curtains which she 'hates'. Another child's room lacks personality as staff have not sufficiently encouraged them to personalise their room, despite the child having lived in the home for a considerable period. More could be done to ensure that children have personal spaces which reflect their identities.

The home has a homely feel in some areas but lacks care and consideration in others. In some rooms, the decoration needs attention as walls are largely bare, room decoration is not homely and one room has an unnecessarily office-like feel.

Children have good relationships with staff, and staff know them well. Some staff are enthusiastic about their roles and use a therapeutic approach in their practice. One child recognises that the relationships he shares with staff have helped his behaviours in the home become less risky. The relationships that children share with staff help them to feel cared for and valued.

Children make progress with their risk-taking behaviours and the relationships that they develop with staff. Children are encouraged and supported to bring family and friends into the home, and one child has a planned sleepover with a friend.

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

Staff know children well and are clear on what risks they present. Care plans, risk assessments and safety plans are brief and contain relevant information. Some plans lack sufficient detail, and language is institutionalised at times.

Staff are not always clear on how to respond when incidents relating to substance misuse take place. Therefore, children are sometimes supported by staff in different ways. Some staff discuss locking downstairs rooms to 'guide' children to bed, while others sit with children and monitor them downstairs before encouraging them to bed. There are also differences in how children are monitored throughout the night. This means that staff are not using a clear and consistent approach to children's behaviours, and some staff are using restrictions which are not risk assessed or reviewed.

When children go missing from home, staff search for them, try to establish communication with them, and communicate with relevant professionals and the child's own network to ensure that they are brought back to the home as soon as possible. Staff say that they welcome children home. Insufficient recording of incidents makes it unclear what led up to the incidents and whether staff consistently respond to children in the same way.

When children are missing from home, consequences are often used. Consequences include limiting free time, the deduction of pocket money to pay for taxis to get children home and threats to remove holiday activities. This stands in contrast to care plans, which promote 'natural consequences'. The use of consequences in these situations increases the risk that children will not return home.

When children engage in behaviours which might put themselves at risk, it is identified that work needs to be carried out by staff to help children learn about risks and the potential impact of behaviours. Conversations take place with children which are relevant to their needs. However, conversations aimed at learning about online safety or mobile phone use are lacking, which may result in children repeating risky behaviours.

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

The manager is knowledgeable about the children in the home, including their backgrounds and interests, and there is a core established team, which provides stability and consistency to the children. Staff who work in the home say they are proud of the children's achievements and what they achieve for children as a close staff team.

There is a lack of management oversight in respect of significant incidents taking place in the home. This means that opportunities to learn from incidents of children going missing from home or self-harming are missed.

Team meetings and supervision sessions take place regularly, and important issues are raised and discussed. These meetings do not consistently consider the progress children are making and what could be done to support them more. There is little reflection on significant incidents taking place, or what could be learned from these incidents. This means that staff are not consistently encouraged to reflect on their practice, and opportunities to share expertise, advice and learning among the team are lost.

Leaders and managers are aware of vulnerabilities in aspects of staff practice, but there are no clear plans to address these. Where issues are identified with staff, more could be

done to provide support and to monitor performance to avoid mistakes taking place and ensure consistent practice among the team. Where it has been identified that staff would benefit from informal support plans being implemented, this has not taken place and clear decision-making from leaders and managers around this has not been evident. This means that staff have not received necessary support to ensure that they are confident and capable of delivering safe care.

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, The 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. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that when children make requests for equipment or activities, reasonable requests are actioned. Where this is not possible, alternatives must be discussed with children, and clear outcomes must be provided to children about their requests.	10 January 2025
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that where children are on part-time timetables, there are clear plans to structure their day when they are not in school, with activities and tasks which relate to their plans.	10 January 2025
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.	10 January 2025

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child’s relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(v)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that where children present risk-taking behaviours, staff carry out relevant work with the child to reduce their risk, in line with their plans. Additionally, the registered person should ensure that risk assessments are clear and that staff are all following these appropriately when significant incidents happen in the home.	
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, the registered person should ensure that they have effective oversight of staff practice to ensure that staff are adhering to children’s plans. Additionally, the registered person should ensure that they have effective oversight of incidents taking place in the home to ensure that they know what leads up to them and how staff respond so that learning and reflective practice can take place.	10 January 2025

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: Hampshire County Council

Registered provider address: 3rd Floor, Elizabeth II Court North, The Castle,
Winchester, Hampshire SO23 8UG

Responsible individual: John Stacey

Registered manager: Margaret Lilley

Inspector

Min Sims, Social Care Inspector

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