

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 who experience social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the inspection, two children were living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2022.

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 June 2025

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: 20 November 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/11/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
12/04/2023	Full	Good
21/11/2022	Full	Inadequate
30/08/2022	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

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

Children are being cared for by a staff team that understands their needs. One child said that they do not have many positive relationships with staff, and they spoke about their wish to leave the home. Despite these views, the children have felt able to talk to staff about some of the challenges they have experienced in their lives and the children have generally engaged positively with staff. For example, the children participated in an event to celebrate the retirement of a long-standing member of staff.

The home is generally well maintained. However, one child's bedroom was not personalised or nicely kept. Staff understand how the children's experiences affect their preferences, and there have been attempts to support the child to keep their room tidy. However, there is no consistent approach to how staff should help them to do this.

Staff's approach to meeting the children's health needs is inconsistent. Staff have worked creatively with medical partners to overcome barriers to children's access to intimate healthcare. One child spoke about their difficulties with eating in the home and staff also shared concerns about their diet. Staff have not yet spoken to the child's GP about their concerns or sought specialist assessment or advice. As a result, the child's diet remains unhealthy and extremely limited. Similarly, one child has not received their statutory health assessment and managers have not challenged an insufficient rationale to delay this by partner agencies.

Staff gather the children's views effectively about the care they receive. However, they do not always act on them. For example, children have asked to develop a spare room into an art studio. Staff have attempted to engage the children with decorating and shopping in relation to this, which they have declined. As a result, the staff have decided not to proceed with the project.

Children make progress in developing independence skills. Staff track the children's achievements using an excellent monitoring and recording system which links to an accredited award scheme. The children have been able to earn qualifications while learning about topics which will be helpful to them in their lives.

Staff help and encourage the children to spend time with their family and friends outside the home. Staff advocate for the children's time with family to increase where this is appropriate. This has helped the children to maintain important relationships.

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

Staff do not have effective oversight of the children's activity online. There has been a robust multi-agency assessment which has considered the risks associated with implementing restrictions to one child's devices and this approach is under constant review. Staff are highly aware of the risks, and the information they have collected because of this approach has been important in helping to protect the child. However, the IT systems currently used by staff do not allow for the children's online access to be individualised. As a result, another child's online activity is not monitored and there has been minimal online safety education completed with the children. Senior leaders have identified these concerns and there are plans to replace the online infrastructure soon.

The use of physical intervention is rare when managing the children's behaviour. It is used proportionately and when necessary to keep the children safe. Managers do not routinely speak to staff about the use of restraint and have missed opportunities to speak with the children about their experiences. This means that potential learning has been missed.

Managers take appropriate action when the children make allegations of harm against staff. They work effectively with safeguarding partners to investigate concerns. The children know how to complain. On one occasion, a child was upset about the care they had received. They were supported by staff to record their concerns. However, there is no record of the steps taken by managers to investigate the child's concerns or of the outcome of the complaint.

When children express feelings which indicate they may harm themselves, staff take action to protect the child from immediate harm and make referrals to specialist professionals. The children's plans are not always updated when there are concerns about their mental well-being. On one occasion, information was not shared with the wider team and there was no consideration given to how this concern might change the staff response when the child was missing from home.

There is strong multi-agency working between the staff and safeguarding partners to address concerns about possible exploitation of children. Information-sharing practice has been effective in supporting the police to take enforcement action. The effect of this collaboration is inconsistent. While there has been a recent reduction in episodes of going missing for one child, for another child this frequency is still increasing. Staff have not yet consistently completed reflection or education with the children following episodes of going missing to help them understand the risks associated with their behaviour.

Managers have used helpful recording systems to identify and monitor the effectiveness of the response from staff and partner agencies when children are missing from home. This has allowed them to identify shortfalls in practice which have been addressed by all

parties. As a result, the response that the children receive from staff is consistently more positive.

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

The registered manager has not yet taken sufficient action to fully address the requirements identified at the last inspection. Managers do not routinely review incidents, and the systems used to monitor the quality of care are ineffective at identifying weaknesses. For example, the home's statement of purpose has not recently been reviewed and contains inaccurate information about the home's registration.

The needs of new children moving into the home are not fully considered by the manager. Leaders assess the potential effect of the new children on the progress of others already living in the home. One such assessment identified possible concerns but does not adequately address how risks will be mitigated. Consequently, staff have not been prepared to manage the relationship between two children, and one child's progress has been negatively impacted.

Staff say that they feel well supported in their roles by leaders. They have received training relevant to the needs of the children, and they say this has been helpful in identifying the importance of spotting signs and sharing information with regard to exploitation. Staff benefit from regular supervision sessions that help them to reflect on their practice, and they say this is useful to them.

Leaders work proactively with other agencies. Feedback from a range of professionals has been positive with regard to the engagement with safeguarding partners and the care children receive. One safeguarding professional said, '[Staff] have a good understanding of the young person's needs,' while one social worker said, 'The home are very good at communicating with me and other professionals.'

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 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 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 must ensure that where children present risk-taking behaviours, staff complete relevant work with the child to reduce their risk, in line with their plans. In particular, the registered person must ensure that children's plans are updated and that information is promptly shared when new concerns arise that may impact on the response of staff to safeguard children. In particular, the registered person must ensure that there are adequate systems in place to allow staff to monitor children's activity online in ways that are suitable for their individual needs for the purposes of safeguarding. This requirement is restated.	8 August 2025

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 must ensure that they have effective oversight of children's statutory plans. The registered person should also challenge partner agencies when children's statutory plans are not up to date. In particular, the registered person must ensure that they have effective oversight of incidents taking place within the home to ensure that they know what leads up to incidents taking place, and how staff are responding to these so that learning is shared and reflective practice can take place. Additionally, the registered manager must ensure the home's statement of purpose is kept under review and updated to reflect changes to the responsible individual and accurately reflect the registration of the home. The registered person should notify His Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. This requirement is restated.	8 August 2025
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles.	8 August 2025

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— understand the child’s health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child’s health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child’s age and understanding. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that they work collaboratively with partner agencies so that children have prompt access to their statutory health assessments. The registered person should ensure that children’s health and care plans are informed by relevant professional advice so that they fully understand how to support children with any specialist health or well-being needs. In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff make, or help children to make, appropriate referrals to relevant medical professionals when there are concerns about children’s health or well-being.	
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (3))	8 August 2025
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so (“the authorised person”)— has spoken to the user about the measure; and 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)(a)(b)(i)(c))	8 August 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. Records of any relevant assessments should clearly describe how identified concerns about the impact on children will be mitigated. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The registered person should ensure that when children make suggestions to improve the quality of care and their experiences in the home, their engagement in the fulfilment of those suggestions is not a barrier to their views being acted upon by staff and leaders. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)
- The registered person should ensure that staff work with children to establish clear routines and responsibilities regarding the upkeep of the condition of their bedrooms. The registered person should respond promptly when children make reasonable requests to make changes to use of rooms in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.20)

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: The Castle, Winchester SO23 8UG

Responsible individual: Deborah Price

Registered manager: Margaret Lilley

Inspector

Glen Strowbridge, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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