

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 operated by a local authority. It provides care for up to three children. Its aim is to help children to 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.

Inspection dates: 30 and 31 August 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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Date of last inspection: 31 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
06/07/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
15/05/2018	Full	Outstanding
09/10/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Significant and widespread failures in how well children are helped and protected and how the home is led and managed have left children at risk.

Staff have failed to address safeguarding concerns regarding substance misuse and potential child exploitation. Measures are not in place to guide staff in how to respond to these challenges.

Children are not making progress. Children said that they are not interested in building relationships with staff because there are too many staff changes. Children are not always supported by staff to pursue their hobbies and interests. As a result, children do not have plentiful opportunities to build secure, trusting relationships with staff and each other.

Children say that they do not know what their care plans are for the future. Staff do not help children to gain the necessary independence skills to keep themselves safe and well. Staff have not completed the pathway plan for a child who will be moving on soon.

Staff are not consistent in their management of behaviour and engagement with children. For example, some staff will enter a child's bedroom when necessary, while others will continually talk to the child through their bedroom door. Children are experiencing inconsistent guidance and boundaries from staff in relation to substance misuse. A lack of structure prevents healthy routines being established for the children.

Following some significant incidents, staff have talked to children to help them to understand and learn. Although few in number, these discussions are comprehensive and enable the child to reflect and understand their responses and emotions. For instance, following an incident in which a member of staff was hurt, the child was able to reflect on the consequences of their actions and the impact that they may have. This has reduced the number of incidents of injury to staff and others. However, the records of these conversations are not always reviewed by managers and the information is not used to inform the model of care and the quality of care provided in the home.

One child accesses some education provided in the home; one child does not engage in education at all. Some staff make positive efforts to encourage access to learning, and attendance at health appointments. However, the chaotic daily routines limit the effectiveness of these attempts. There is a lack of commitment to the task when children refuse. As a result, children are not receiving the necessary support to improve their daily lives and well-being.

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

Children at risk of criminal and sexual exploitation have not been supported effectively. When children have returned to the home with additional mobile phones and unexplained amounts of money, staff do not always share this information with the relevant professionals. There is a lack of follow-up and professional curiosity by staff, leaving children at further risk. One child seen in the community with older males was not immediately approached by staff. As a result, this child was left vulnerable and at risk of further exploitation.

On one occasion, staff described a child as being under the influence of an unknown substance on their return to the home. While initial medical advice was sought regarding the administration of prescribed medication, staff failed to record whether checks were undertaken to ensure the child's welfare overnight. The manager did not address this and it is not known if checks were made.

There is a serious concern relating to children's use of cannabis in the home. Staff do not challenge or address effectively the frequency and significance of this for one child. Staff reported experiencing headaches from the cannabis smell which permeates throughout the home. Leaders and managers have not put in place a plan to address this. Staff have not completed room searches as stated in the child's risk assessment. As a result, children have continued to bring cannabis into the home. Indicators of cannabis on site and in the child's bedroom, and the risk of smoking in bedrooms, have not been followed up robustly.

Children's risk assessments do not include all relevant information on known and current risks. Additionally, some risk assessments include information which, on further investigation by senior leaders during the inspection, was found to be no longer relevant. This means that staff are referring to risk management plans which do not provide them with accurate information on how to safely manage and reduce children's risks.

Recording is poor. Serious incidents, including assaults that have caused injury to staff, are not fully recorded. Leaders and managers do not review these records in a timely way. This does not allow managers to have oversight or review the practice of their staff. Nor does it provide assurance that children are appropriately safeguarded.

When children do not return to the home at an agreed time, staff follow the procedure for incidents of going missing and ensure regular contact with the children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There have been a number of changes to management arrangements, some of which have been ineffective, over the past year. In the absence of a manager, leaders and managers failed to provide effective management cover. This included a

lack of practical and on-site support to children and staff. There has now been an appointment to the manager's position.

Staff shortages have meant that deputy managers are often covering shifts, reducing the time that they have available to carry out their management responsibilities. Some measures have been taken to recruit, and to use consistent agency staff.

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that the regulator is informed of serious incidents. The quality assurance tools in place to assist staff are ineffective. Staff do not follow processes; for example, they do not use the correct in-house forms. This means that information is not recorded and shared correctly. This prevents the leadership team from having sufficient oversight of staff practice. As a result, information is lost and the ability to incorporate the safeguarding aspects and progress of children's care is significantly reduced.

Not all staff receive regular reflective and practice-related supervision. Therefore, some staff are not able to discuss standard elements of their practice. Staff have not completed sufficient professional development. In addition, staff dynamics have prevented full oversight of the shortfalls by senior managers.

Not all staff have received training in the model of care which supports the ethos of the home. Staff have not had bespoke training in areas that would support the children currently living at the home. For example, staff have limited knowledge of strategies to address alcohol and substance misuse. This means that children do not progress in areas such as physical and mental health.

The manager has completed a quality of care review. This did not identify the failures found during this inspection. These reviews are consistently submitted late to the regulator. Monitoring systems have failed to identify the significant shortfalls found during inspection.

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— 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; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; 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)(c)(h))	9 October 2022
*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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;	9 October 2022

that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(b))	
In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding. help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship. (Regulation 11 (2)(a)(iv)(v)(vii)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that all significant conversations are recorded correctly and used to improve practice.	10 December 2022
The care planning standard is that children— have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. that arrangements are in place to— plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority. (Regulation 14 (1)(b) (2)(a)(b)(iii))	10 December 2022

In particular, the registered person should ensure that when children move in and move on from the home they are prepared accordingly.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development. receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that all staff receive practice-related reflective supervision.	12 November 2022
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. there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(e)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that notifications are sent to Ofsted in a timely manner and provide sufficient information about the actions taken.	12 November 2022
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed;	10 December 2022

The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(b) (4)(a) (5)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that the reports are thorough, evaluative and submitted according to regulation.	
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— understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(iv)) In particular, that when children are refusing to attend education, staff consistently support and challenge this.	10 December 2022

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendation

- 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. The statement of purpose is an important document in the process of care planning as it sets out the needs of children the home is set up and equipped to care for. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

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: 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: Post vacant

Inspector

Jill Sephton-Wright, Social Care Inspector

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