

SC038522

Registered provider: Southern Adolescent Care Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home that is registered to care for up to three children. There was one child living at the home at the time of the inspection. Another child had recently moved to semi-independent accommodation.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since October 2024.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 October 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
---	-------------

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
---	------

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 28 January 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/01/2025	Full	Good
25/07/2023	Full	Good
17/10/2022	Full	Good
03/11/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home has a warm, relaxed atmosphere which makes children feel at home. Children's privacy and individualised space is respected and is well balanced with any identified safety issues. Children's views are considered when planning for their routines, activities or when addressing complaints and allegations.

Staff are dedicated to meeting the children's needs and are consistent in supporting children through both difficult and fun times. Staff's approach is nurturing and child centred. The child who currently lives at the home often seeks advice and support from staff, with whom she feels comfortable to share her worries and feelings. This is considerable progress for this child, in comparison to their starting point. One child who has recently moved to independent living remains in contact with staff. This evidences that children living at this home form trusting relationships with staff, which supports them to settle at the home and develop resilience when transitioning into independent living.

Staff meet children's health needs and support them to attend their primary health care and specialist appointments. This includes supporting children to reflect on the importance of prioritising their physical and mental health.

Staff promote children's educational needs. The child who moved to independence was supported by staff to enrol into a college in her new local area. The child who currently lives at the home is not in education due to their needs. The provider has their internal educational specialists who, alongside the staff at the home, are in close communication with the virtual school. They drafted a bespoke educational package for the child, with individual tutoring and creative educational activities that reflect the child's interests. This supports the child to develop the necessary knowledge and skills to widen their opportunities in the future. For example, the child was supported to improve her spelling and grammar by creating and reviewing videos.

The care offered to children is individualised to their needs, vulnerabilities and aspirations. Independence is well planned at each child's pace and considers their age, understanding and stage of development. Staff support children to learn skills such as cooking, budgeting, completing a CV, accessing health and support services independently, keeping safe in the community and on-line, and managing difficult emotions. The children's independence plans are reviewed regularly and adapted to unplanned changes in circumstances. For example, following an unexpected event, staff provided additional support to a child around keeping safe in the community, bearing in mind their forthcoming independence.

Staff support children's family time in accordance with children's wishes and when it is safe to do so. Staff advocate for children's wishes and feelings with their respective local

authorities. Safe friendships are encouraged. Children are helped to access a range of activities, as per their expressed interests.

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

Children say that they feel safe in staff's care. Staff know children well and are able to keep children safe at the home and during activities in the community. However, this is not always reflected in the way incidents and advice to staff are recorded.

Risk assessments provide clear information about children's historic and current behaviours. This includes staff guidance related to risks, reasons behind children's behaviours and how to identify signs of potential escalations beforehand. This, in conjunction with knowing the children well, helps staff to prevent some of the incidents and identify the right support during unwanted behaviours.

Behaviour support plans are individualised to children's needs, follow the local authority's care plans and provide sufficient information about children's short-term and long-term goals. Children's progress is measured, and additional support strategies are identified where needed. Staff understand the children's communication style including through their behaviours. For example, before moving from the home, a child's worries about their future led to missing-from-home events. Staff helped the child to better cope with their worries, which led to a reduction in the child going missing from home.

Staff's calm and empathic approach helps children to learn how to better manage their emotions. The provider's therapeutic ethos is evidenced in every aspect of the care that staff offer to children. This provides them with stability and has led to children's emotional well-being improving since they moved into the home. It has also contributed to a reduction in the frequency of serious incidents since the last inspection. A professional provided positive feedback about the staff's ability to help a child form trusting relationships with staff and how this helps with managing the child's behaviour.

Allegations are taken seriously, are reported to the children's social workers and the local authority designated officer, and internal investigations consider children's views. The safety plans put in place following allegations are well balanced, support is considered for both children and staff, and restorative work is completed when appropriate.

Due to the complexities of children's needs, some restrictions were put in place. For example, alarm doors are used proportionately to safeguard the children living at the home. Physical intervention was part of a child's plan, but this was used as a last resort to address the child's behaviour. All staff are trained in the provider's preferred de-escalation techniques. The number of physical interventions is low, staff use alternative management responses successfully. A contributory factor to the effectiveness of these methods is related to the positive and secure relationships that the child has developed with staff.

Missing-from-home incidents have significantly reduced since the last inspection. When children are missing from home, there is a swift and proactive response from staff who

search for the children, remain in contact with them and return them home safely whenever possible. Support from the police is requested proportionately to safeguard the children living at the home. There is good multi-agency collaboration with the social workers, the police and the provider's internal specialists to locate and support the children in a non-judgemental way. Staff request return-home interviews in a timely manner after children return home. However, this is not always clearly recorded in the incident reports or the notifications sent to the regulator.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by an experienced and permanent registered manager. The registered manager is also a regional manager. The home manager and the deputy manager help her to run the home. The management team is supported by an experienced responsible individual who knows the children and staff well.

The home is fully staffed, including when additional support is needed for children. Staff are committed to ensuring consistency of care, particularly when children experience difficulties or are in crisis.

The registered manager, home manager and the responsible individual have a good insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the home. The registered manager has clear plans on how to support staff to continuously improve the care provided to children. This includes managers being available to spend meaningful individual time with children living at the home and improving how the provider seeks feedback from the partner agencies, parents, and children.

The registered manager and the home manager use learning from incidents, feedback from external professionals and children to improve their own practice. For example, the home manager and the registered manager worked with the monthly independent visitor to reflect on identifying more appropriate consequences in response to children's behaviours.

Staff feel valued, supported and listened to. They take collective responsibility for supporting the children and work well together to identify innovative and creative solutions on how to improve children's experiences at the home. For example, staff have identified incentives which are appealing to children's likes and interests to promote positive behaviour.

Staff supervision is up to date and annual appraisals are reflective, supporting staff to identify good practice but also identifying areas of learning and professional development. Mandatory training is up to date. New staff say the induction is helpful to support them to provide safe, nurturing care from the onset, and the support received from the management team is consistent.

The key work sessions records are child centred, written to the children and easy to understand by them. However, the incident reports and the safeguarding notifications do not always provide sufficient information about the events, the actions taken by staff to

support children, the full advice given by the management team to staff, or the professional judgment behind various decisions. This can lead to an inaccurate understanding of what happened, particularly if the reader was not present at the event or if children were to access their records later in life.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. The registered person should ensure that staff record information on individual children in a way that will be helpful to the child and that records represent a significant contribution to their life history. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4 and 14.5)

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: SC038522

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Southern Adolescent Care Services Ltd

Registered provider address: Maybrook House, Third Floor, Queensway, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Michelle Callard

Registered manager: Nicola Young

Inspector

Claudia Poienar, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025