

SC040631

Registered provider: Surrey County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and run by a local authority. The staff care for up to four children who have experienced childhood trauma and have complex difficulties relating to their social and emotional well-being. Two children currently live at the home; both children were present during the inspection.

The manager has been in post since September 2022 and is in the process of submitting her application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 November 2022

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: 25 May 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/05/2021	Full	Good
28/11/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/07/2018	Full	Good
27/09/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

The children who live at this home benefit from nurturing, child-centred care and support, which has a positive impact on their lives. However, shortfalls in safeguarding practice have undermined the overall quality and experience of care for some of the children since the last inspection.

Children enjoy spending time with staff and having fun in their company. Relationships between the staff and the children are warm and caring. Children experience care that is sensitive and responsive to their identity and family history. Staff support the children to maintain relationships with family, friends and other people who are important to them.

Staff work closely with the children's schools and colleges to help ensure that their education is tailored to their needs. Bespoke packages lead to the children engaging in a variety of educational opportunities which help increase their attainment and confidence.

Good joint working between the staff and a local day provision across health, children and education services means that the children's therapeutic and social needs are prioritised and supported well.

Staff maintain a strong focus on supporting the children to develop their independence and learn life skills for adult life, at a pace that is right for them.

Changes in the children's group dynamics have led to periods when children in the home have been unsettled and have not felt safe. This has led to unplanned placement endings for some children.

The manager and responsible individual lead whole team debriefs and reflective opportunities for the staff. This informs new learning and future planning, specifically to reduce the number of unplanned placement endings for children.

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

Staff have not always managed the children's behaviour effectively. There have been incidents in the home that have resulted in the staff calling police to help manage the children's behaviours, leading to some children being arrested. However, under fresh leadership and an increasingly cohesive staff group, police call-outs to the home have significantly reduced.

The manager's records of safeguarding incidents, including contacts and follow-up actions taken, are good. However, a shortfall was found concerning an allegation

made by one child about another child. This information was reported to the police but there was no record of a referral to the child's social worker or the multi-agency safeguarding hub. Managers failed to ensure that the home's records showed their decisions and actions, and to make sure that this information was not lost.

The home's location risk assessment contains up-to-date intelligence from local services. Managers have good links with the local police community officers. Consequently, the staff have current safeguarding knowledge of the local area.

Focused monthly meetings between the home's staff and police help identify the responsive support required for the children at the highest risk. Moreover, information is readily available for internal and external oversight of emerging risks and patterns that may arise over time. This helps reduce risk for the children.

Children have up-to-date risk assessments and behaviour management plans. These could be strengthened by incorporating the views of the children in their plans.

One child's risk assessment plan did not contain guidance or a safety plan about her food allergy. This means that the staff may not know how to recognise and manage the child's allergic reaction.

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

Changes in the management team, together with staff vacancies, have had an impact on the quality of care provided to children.

The newly appointed manager is in the process of submitting her application to Ofsted. Although the manager has not been in post long, they and the responsible individual and the deputy manager have formed a close, cohesive team, working together to make improvements.

The previous manager did not send a number of notifications of safeguarding incidents to Ofsted within the required time frame. As a result, there was a delay in Ofsted's scrutiny of the manager's safeguarding actions.

The local authority's recruitment strategy has been positive. A new cohort of staff has been recruited to the home. The new staff work alongside experienced staff. This helps the less experienced staff to develop their expertise and resilience. Staff said that they feel well supported and receive good levels of training and support.

Leaders and staff make a great effort to make the home environment warm, homely and inviting for the children. However, the imposing size of the home means that it retains an institutionalised feel. The home is not consistently maintained to a reasonable standard. One child said the home was too big and sometimes cold. Leaders have not progressed the home's redevelopment plan at a quick enough pace. Therefore, the previous requirement in relation to this has been restated.

The manager ensures that safer recruitment practice is applied. Recruitment records are much improved.

Leaders, managers and staff work effectively with other professionals, and this makes a real difference to the children's progress. Several external professionals commented positively on the communication and professionalism of the managers and staff.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1) (2)(vii)(c)(i)) This relates specifically to the registered person making progress with the home's development plan for refurbishment of areas of the home that need improvement, including the kitchen. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is repeated.	16 January 2023
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;	16 January 2023

have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; 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; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are located so that children are effectively safeguarded; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(i)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(b)(c)(d))	
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	16 January 2023

there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(e))	
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Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that each child is provided with support (appropriate to their age and understanding) to communicate their views, wishes and feelings and participate as fully as possible in all aspects of their care planning and daily care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.6)

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: SC040631

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Surrey County Council

Registered provider address: Quadrant Court, 35 Guildford Road, Woking, Surrey GU22 7QQ

Responsible individual: Scott Hampshire

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Anne-Marie Davies, Social Care Inspector

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