

SC040631

Registered provider: Surrey 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. 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.

Three children currently live at the home, and they were all present and spoken to during the inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since September 2023.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 August 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 6 June 2023

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
06/06/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
09/11/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
25/05/2021	Full	Good
28/11/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: Good

Children enjoy trusting relationships with staff who work hard to support them with the things they need help with. Regular, child-focused key-work sessions are sensitively recorded for the child. These sessions enable children to share their thoughts and worries and think about how to achieve their goals and aspirations. This helps children to make progress and know that they are cared for, and it provides them with meaningful records for the future.

Staff promote constructive relationships and positive behaviours between children. Staff talk to children to help them understand the impact of their actions on others. Positive behaviour and achievements are actively rewarded and celebrated through monthly achievement letters to children. Children look forward to receiving these. However, consequences are not always used consistently. This is because some consequences have not related to the child's behaviour nor been restorative in nature.

Children have plentiful opportunities to share their views and are supported to do so. Regular child-led meetings help children to share their wishes and feelings. Staff support children to prepare for meetings and promote the use of advocates and independent visitors. This helps children to feel listened to and that their opinions are valued.

When children move into the home, there are careful assessments of their needs and consideration with partner agencies of how these are met. Introduction and transition plans are created in partnership with the child where appropriate. This helps children to settle and feel cared for. Children's moves out of the home have been planned where possible. For those moves that have been unplanned or quicker than expected, staff worked with other professionals to support successful moves and stay in touch with children when appropriate.

Children are supported and encouraged to access education and to learn. The staff team works closely with education colleagues and advocates strongly for children to receive the support they need. For two children, staff have been instrumental in progressing assessments for education, health and care plans so that they can access the support they need.

Children's health needs are met well. Children receive support to help them make healthy choices. The development of hospital passports for all children has been welcomed by health partners. This helps professionals in health settings to fully understand children's needs without them having to retell their story.

The communal areas of the property are homely and child-friendly, including play equipment and photos. Children are supported to personalise their bedrooms. Overall, the home environment helps children to feel comfortable and nurtured. However, the children's bedroom doors are not suited to a family home environment and make an

institutional impression. There is no evidence to support that the use of such doors is necessary.

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

Staff understand the risks to children and the action to take in the event of safeguarding concerns, such as when children go missing from home. Children's risk management and safety plans are updated when needed so that staff are aware of and respond to children's changing needs. This shows that children's safety and well-being are a priority.

There has been a serious safeguarding concern in the home recently, which related to risks between children. Although immediate action was taken, plans were updated and known risks considered, one child experienced a negative incident. Managers are in the process of conducting a learning review to consider if there are changes needed to prevent similar incidents in future. This shows an openness to learn and strengthen safeguarding practice.

Staff respond to challenging behaviour constructively, using techniques to deescalate situations and calm children. Physical intervention, when used, is a last resort, and children are offered support to follow this up and reflect. This helps children to manage their emotions and to feel heard when difficult things happen.

When new staff come to work in the home, managers follow safer recruitment practices. This helps ensure, as far as possible, that children are not cared for by unsafe people.

Some medication errors have occurred. These have been identified through planned checks, and appropriate action was taken at the time to ensure that children were safe and well. A learning review has been conducted, and measures have been put in place to reduce the risk of future errors.

Regular health and safety checks are completed to maintain a safe environment. Action is taken promptly to address risks that are identified, such as through the fire risk assessment. The location assessment for the home is overdue for review. This means that risk management and safety plans for children are not informed by the most up-to-date information about the local area.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: Good

The home is led by a suitably qualified and experienced registered manager. She is dedicated to her role and the progress of children. The registered manager and her deputies are enthusiastic in their efforts to build trusting and supportive relationships with children and staff who work in the home. This makes the leadership team members good role models for staff.

The registered manager is a strong advocate for children and challenges persistently when children are not receiving the service they should. This helps children to receive

better responses from other agencies, such as education, and it shows them that they are cared for.

Leaders and managers have systems in place to monitor the care and progress of children. These have supported improvements, such as in the management of medication. The registered manager has completed a quality of care review, but this has not been shared with Ofsted as required.

Electronic door and corridor alarms are used in the home. There is written consent from children's placing authorities, and they are used with good intent. One child is reassured by the alarms and has said that they help her feel safe. However, the provider's policy does not fully explain and inform their use, and the need for them is not regularly reviewed. Consequently, leaders and managers have not ensured whether the use of these alarms is necessary or proportionate for each individual child.

The home has a stable staff team, and there is minimal use of agency staff. Staff are positive about working in the home and the support they receive from colleagues and managers. Leaders and managers have introduced the development of staff quality standard champions to help all staff to fully understand the requirements of their roles. Regular input from a therapist consultant supports staff to reflect and consider different approaches. This helps children to receive care from well-resourced, familiar staff.

Leaders and managers work hard to maintain good working relationships with professional partners and family members. Most professionals consulted were positive about the quality of professional relationships and communication. One parent was very positive about the work of the home and the support and care provided for them and their child. They described the home as '10/10'. One partner agency provided some constructive feedback about aspects of care and the staff's communication with them. This was shared with leaders and managers to consider.

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 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; and 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; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii)) In particular, ensure that children's bedroom doors are not institutional and do not compromise a homely environment. This requirement is restated.	23 October 2024
No measure of control or discipline which is excessive, unreasonable or contrary to paragraph (2) may be used in relation to any child. The following measures may not be used to discipline any child— any restriction, other than one imposed by a court or in accordance with regulation 22 (contact and access to communications), on— a child's contact with parents, relatives or friends;	23 October 2024

visits to the child by the child's parents, relatives or friends. (Regulation 19 (1) (2)(c)(i)(ii))	
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; and the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(d))	23 October 2024
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. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report"). 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. (Regulation 45 (1) (3) (4)(a))	23 October 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards' page 64, paragraph 15.1)

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 address: Surrey County Council, Quadrant Court, 35 Guildford Road, Woking GU22 7QQ

Responsible individual: Paul Thomas

Registered manager: Lucy Symes

Inspector

Jacob Robson, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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