

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 three children who all have complex difficulties, which generally include concerns about their mental well-being. Ofsted registered the manager on 29 July 2020.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 8 September 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 25 to 26 May 2021

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: 28 November 2019

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
28/11/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/07/2018	Full	Good
27/09/2017	Full	Good
16/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress here because leaders, managers and staff have a clear understanding of their needs and how to meet these. Children like the staff and enjoy spending time with them. Professionals speak very positively about how the staff look after children. Leaders and managers continually strive to meet children's needs. One professional said: 'Staff are ensuring that her [the child's] voice is heard and that she is fully involved in matters concerning her care and her future.'

Decisions about children moving to the home are carefully assessed. Leaders and managers consider how children will get on together as well as potential risk factors for both the child who they are assessing and children who already live here. Plans to reduce any likely concerns, as well as a review of staff skills to ensure they can meet children's needs, are made before a child moves in. Consequently, children settle quickly into the home and build positive relationships with other children.

Children feel able to make complaints. These are investigated thoroughly, and children receive the outcome of their complaint verbally. However, one complaint is taking time to resolve. This lack of clarity does not support the child to feel confident about how staff are managing her complaint or when the outcome will be made available. The staff support children exceptionally well to develop and maintain positive relationships with health professionals. One health professional said: 'They [staff and managers] help and support young people to develop independence skills that are essential for managing their health when they become care leavers.'

The staff build good relationships with children's families. This has a positive impact on relationships between children and their families. One child said that she was getting on much better with her parent and the staff had helped her to achieve this. However, staff have not had the opportunity to receive training on working with parents, to provide a consistent and informed approach to this important aspect of work.

The environment of the home is warm and inviting in some, but not all, areas. The lounge areas are comfortable and children's bedrooms are personalised. There is a development plan to improve certain areas of the home, such as the bathrooms and communal rooms. However, these plans do not cover the home's kitchen, which is tired, worn and does not provide a homely environment.

Plans that the staff put in place to support children to move on from the home are effective and take account of an individual child's needs. One professional said that the staff are providing effective help to a child to move on because of their 'intimate knowledge of her complex needs' and 'determination to see her progress into adult services goes smoothly'.

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

The support of managers and staff makes a significant difference to children's safety and well-being. The staff work effectively with other safeguarding agencies and keep detailed, well-organised records of safeguarding incidents. Leaders, managers and the staff have an in-depth understanding of potential safeguarding concerns generally as well as those that affect the children who live here. The staff use their knowledge well to minimise risks to children, both within the home and the wider community.

Risk assessments are detailed and provide the staff with useful guidance on what to do to address risk. Incident reports are well written, however, risks for individual children are not prioritised. The absence of prioritisation means that new staff may not have a clear view of the main risks for individual children. Nonetheless, current staff do know the risks for each child and speak confidently about how they would minimise, and act on, these risks.

Children are encouraged to give their views. They are supported to be involved in activities that they are interested in and the staff talk with children about the things that matter to them. As a result, children feel listened to, even when the staff make decisions that they disagree with.

Records of individual discussions between staff and children are not written in a child-friendly format for the child. This is a missed opportunity to support a child to recognise and understand their progress and reduces the potential for children to be able to reflect on this in the future.

Management oversight of health and safety requirements and compliance is improving. Within the organisation, leaders and managers are clarifying lines of accountability and setting out minimum requirements to ensure they adequately protect children. For example, the organisation is acting appropriately on concerns about the quality of fire risk assessments.

There are risk assessments for substances controlled by the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH). During the inspection, it was not clear that the staff had read the COSHH risk assessments and knew how to act in accordance with these risk assessments if an incident occurred. Managers took action during the inspection to ensure all staff were familiar with the COSHH assessments.

Recruitment files do not contain all the necessary information, such as application details, dates when interviews took place or how gaps in employment are explored. Changes within the organisation's recruitment practice have led to some information being checked online and therefore available to the HR department only. This does not allow for a full record of a person's recruitment to be readily available for recruiters to review and maintain the necessary records. The responsible individual has raised this concern within the organisation but no response about how this will be remedied was available at the time of inspection.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers have a strong vision for their care of children, which the staff embrace and value. The registered manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home well and acts on issues effectively when she has identified them’.

The majority of the team consists of recently appointed staff, which the registered manager has factored into her leadership approach. She coaches and develops the staff, focusing on providing learning opportunities that develop their knowledge of the care she wants to develop, such as dialectical behavioural therapy training. One member of staff said that in the last six months she has developed well in her role and gained a lot of confidence because of the support provided.

The staff say that their supervision is reflective, and the records of supervision meetings support this. Team meetings are used to reflect on children’s progress, develop staff understanding and keep abreast of the running of the home. This has enabled an open culture to develop within the team. The staff feel able to speak about what is going well and any problems that may arise. They are also enabled to challenge each other’s practice. Staff debrief sessions are held frequently to discuss practice and help the staff to consistently support children. Where necessary, managers take effective action to address any shortfalls in staff practice.

Managers’ monitoring of systems has improved. The requirement and recommendations from the last inspection report are met. The manager knows how well staff are progressing with their qualifications. She has made significant improvements to how safeguarding concerns are recorded.

The home’s last six-monthly report is more evaluative and analytical. This reflects the registered manager’s views on what is important to prioritise. This change has supported the registered manager to understand what is going well and what needs to improve, thereby helping her to continuously refine and develop the quality of children’s care.

Leaders, managers and the staff work effectively with other professionals and this makes a real difference to children’s progress. Several professionals commented positively on communication with the managers and staff. One professional stated that ‘The [staff’s] joined-up approach to working with others is how all other homes should be.’

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 registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d))	30 June 2021
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; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home.	30 June 2021

(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(i)(ii))

This refers specifically to the need for the registered person to refurbish the home's kitchen.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs, and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. This specifically refers to ensuring that staff complete suitable training to support their role in working with children's parents. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should provide clearer guidance on which risks are a priority for the staff to know and understand about how to care for a child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should support the staff to develop more child-friendly one-to-one discussions. The child-friendly discussion records should help children to be able to review their growth and development and have a record of their progress for their futures. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)
- The registered person should ensure that a child who makes a complaint knows the time it will take to review their concerns and to have a conclusion. Any conclusion should be provided in writing to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.13)

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: Lisa Wade

Registered manager: Samantha Heighes

Inspector

Ruth Coler, Social Care Inspector

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