

SC040642

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 home's main purpose is to support and care for young people so that they are ready to live by themselves in the future. The manager was registered by Ofsted on 1 September 2021.

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.

Inspection dates: 27 to 28 April 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 10 December 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/12/2019	Full	Outstanding
21/11/2018	Full	Good
05/12/2017	Full	Good
28/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The staff's abilities to parent children well help all children to make significant progress from the time that they arrive at the home. In one example, staff worked with the child and other professionals to find ways of reducing the risks to her safety and welfare. This enabled the child to live safely in the community and removed the need for her to be placed in a secure children's home. An external professional said about this child: 'They support her really well, and I have seen a massive change in her.'

Children are relaxed with staff and seek out their company to share positive moments and things that they worry about. Supporting children to have fun is part of everyday life; throughout the inspection, the inspectors heard the staff and children laughing together and planning appropriate activities which support children's interests and encourage appropriate friendships.

Staff listen to children and act on their views. The staff keep good records of their discussions with the children, and how these inform plans. The staff's commitment to advocating for children comes through strongly in all aspects of their care. One young person wanted to live locally on her own. Managers and staff persevered in helping her to move to a suitable housing arrangement which meets her wishes and provides good support for her future.

Children's health and education are promoted successfully. The staff support children to attend and engage with health professionals when needed. They involved the virtual education service in providing appropriate educational materials for children to enable them to learn at home. This has resulted in improvements in children's educational achievements during this difficult time.

The staff know children's learning styles well and take these into account to support children to learn, such as taking breaks and relaxing in between focused online study sessions. Their actions have meant that children have remained engaged and positive about education during this difficult year. A social worker said that the staff were instrumental in securing an apprenticeship for a child and that this was a turning point in the child's life.

Leaders and managers have set up systems that develop children's understanding of how to look after themselves in adult life extremely well. The programme that children follow to consider their independence is well structured and child-focused. The programme takes account of a young person's needs to acquire independence skills and have an appropriate support network after leaving care.

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

The registered manager has developed an open and transparent culture within the staff team. The staff regularly challenge and reflect on their own practice and that of their colleagues. They are inquisitive and passionate about finding ways to support children's best interests. Children all spoke positively about how the staff did not give up on them and the difference that this has made to their lives.

Staff talk confidently about different aspects of safeguarding that are most relevant to the children living here, such as child sexual exploitation. Daily staff handover meetings are used well to plan how the staff will work as a team to meet children's needs. One member of staff commented that 'Through... the shift reviews, I developed a huge boost in confidence in how I could manage... tricky situations...'

Professionals speak very highly of how the staff work with them to safeguard children. The professionals' comments included how the staff advocate for children's safety if they feel that care plans are not meeting children's needs. One professional said: 'I think [name of home] is one of the most supportive homes I work with. They are really on board and protective of [name of child] and helping to facilitate other services like ours.'

The staff's responses to any difficulties which the children face are well timed, thoughtful and caring. They result in positive change for a child's safety. For example, the staff are successfully helping one child to better manage her emotional responses to situations which have, in the past, resulted in her assaulting someone.

If a child goes missing, staff's actions protect children's immediate safety and help to reduce the likelihood that the child will go missing again. One child has lived here for some time. She used to go missing regularly, but has not been absent for two years.

The staff encourage positive behaviour and balance this with appropriate safety measures to keep children safe. They make clear agreements with children about their goals and what children are expected to do to achieve them. One child worked in partnership with the staff, and her social worker, to develop and implement a safety plan. The plan has significantly reduced concerns about her safety and welfare.

Health and safety of the premises is generally promoted well. The premises are clean and tidy. Portable appliance testing (PAT) is conducted regularly, and food is stored appropriately. Nevertheless, there are aspects of the oversight of health and safety matters which are not well overseen by leaders and managers. The fire risk assessment completed in February 2021 was not quickly shared with leaders and managers of this home when received by the provider's health and safety department. This department acted quickly on some issues, such as replacement fire doors being fitted. However, it is unclear how other issues, such as the quality of fireproofing in the roof of the home, were assessed and acted on.

Leaders and managers took action during the inspection to know how all fire issues have been dealt with. Leaders and managers are also reviewing how health and safety matters are shared with them as a matter of urgency.

Information for the staff about how they should use any cleaning substance regulated by the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSH) did not fully meet guidance issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Data hazard sheets for the products used were available. However, no risk assessments about how the product should be used at the home were in place. Nevertheless, all cleaning fluids are appropriately stored; staff know how to use cleaning products safely and no incidents involving cleaning products have occurred.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

A very effective, passionate and capable manager focuses her staff team on meeting children's needs creatively and well. She was described as 'amazing' by children, staff and professionals during the inspection. She inspires, supports and challenges everyone to find innovative ways to work collaboratively with everyone involved in a child's life.

The registered manager has a very good vision for the service which starts with providing a lovely environment. She proactively looks for improvement and acts quickly on any issues that she identifies that require attention.

The members of the staff team say that they are very happy working at the home and feel well supported by leaders and managers, who helpfully develop their skills and knowledge. One member of staff who recently returned from an absence said that managers had supported her to return to work. The managers clearly knew her well and the plans made supported her effectively to settle quickly and confidently back to work.

Training plans through the COVID-19 pandemic have enabled staff to continue some face-to-face training as well as completing online training. The staff speak positively about the range of training that they have completed and they are able to articulate how this supports their practice. One member of staff said that as the team came from such a wide range of backgrounds, they learn from each other as well as from training.

Leaders and managers know the strengths and weaknesses of their service well. The staff team has a mixture of newer and long-serving staff. The registered manager has good plans for developing areas which she considers require attention. For example, all managers have been working on the staff's quality of record-keeping. In addition, while the pandemic has hindered some professionals' ability to work regularly with staff on therapeutic aspects of their care, these types of support are planned to recommence soon.

Communication with other professionals supports and challenges the team around the child to make the right decisions which focus on children's needs and their

views. One professional said that the staff make it easy for him to work with them because of their commitment to treating children with respect.

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

Recommendation

- Leaders and managers should ensure that all health and safety matters are being appropriately overseen and meet health and safety guidance issued by the relevant health and safety bodies. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.4)

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: SC040642

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Lisa Wade

Registered manager: Rebecca Hanifan

Inspectors

Ruth Coler, Social Care Inspector

Skye Frain, Social Care Inspector

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