

SC045408

Registered provider: Surrey County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides a short-break service for up to 2 children who experience social, emotional and mental health difficulties. It is operated by Surrey County Council and the local NHS trust. There was one child staying at the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since September 2025.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 February 2026

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 August 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/08/2024	Full	Outstanding
03/05/2023	Full	Good
29/11/2022	Full	Good
29/03/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The service has been used 71 times for short breaks since the last inspection. Children receive a good quality of care during their stays. The service has helped to prevent psychiatric admissions, long stays on hospital wards, placements far from home or in unregistered settings, and placement breakdowns. The service continues to be beneficial to children and their families. This model of provision and the associated expertise are being shared with other local authorities that may be considering setting up similar arrangements.

Children receive care that is child centred. The support provided makes a positive difference to children and their families. This is because staff aim to identify children's needs and form effective relationships, despite children only staying for a short time. Staff understand their duties well and are dedicated to their roles. In addition, children benefit from therapeutic interventions and assessments that assist their ongoing development, even after leaving the home.

The admissions process is thorough; children's suitability is assessed by mental health professionals and admissions are agreed by the registered manager. Children are consulted about their stays and have a right to withdraw from this service at any time. Very few children have discontinued their agreements. This highlights that children are made to feel important in the decision-making and that their views are listened to. One parent said that their child was 'greeted warmly and professionally by staff, who offered reassurance and who were soothing and nurturing on their arrival'.

Children's stays are well planned; this includes exploring their interests and hobbies through individualised activities, while children receive therapeutic input from trained staff and other mental health professionals. Staff aim to avoid disruptions to children's educational arrangements and they support children's learning.

Staff understand the importance of maintaining family relationships and they promote positive time between children and their families. Parents can visit their child at the home and spend meaningful time together. When staff identify ways to improve or repair such relationships, they share these with relevant professionals.

One child stayed longer than was initially agreed. Despite this being testing for staff, they continued to maintain positive relationships with the child to avoid a move to inappropriate provision. This shows staff's dedication and commitment to achieving positive outcomes for children.

Children are given opportunities to share their views about the service that they received during their stay. Feedback is gathered in writing and through direct conversations. The majority of children have provided very positive feedback to staff. Some children have expressed their satisfaction about the helpful support that they received via art work.

One child recorded a song in rapping style, reflecting on their positive experience and how it changed their thinking. All staff were recognised for their personal skills in the lyrics of this song.

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

Staff continuously help the children to keep safe. They are well informed about individual children's vulnerabilities, the methods to reduce risk and the actions to take when children are at risk. The determination of staff to quickly establish trusting relationships and their therapeutic responses to children, are beneficial in keeping children safe.

The registered manager works closely with relevant local authority professionals. Allegations and safeguarding concerns are shared, and local authority designated officers are notified. The registered manager ensures that meetings with professionals are booked and that any agreed safeguarding actions are implemented. Children's welfare and safety are central to all of the actions taken.

One safeguarding concern involved agency staff working at the home. While the correct procedures were followed, the registered manager did not assure themselves that the staff had been recruited safely. There is also a shortfall in scrutinising the recruitment checks for the nurses from the agency.

Staff respond promptly when children go missing. They follow procedures, actively search for the child and take sensible steps to reduce the risks. Staff ensure that the relevant people are informed about such incidents. This collaborative approach helps to ensure that children are protected and quickly brought back to safety.

Restraints are used as a last resort and staff use various de-escalation techniques to avoid such measures. Staff complete thorough records, providing the rationale for restraints and any preventative actions taken to try to avoid the restraint. The registered manager reviews the records of each incident. Staff receive in-depth debriefs after the incidents. However, there is no evidence that the manager or authorised person speaks to the child after the restraint to seek their feedback.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last inspection, this service has experienced a change in management team. This resulted in an unsettled period, despite the responsible individual remaining in place. However, the new registered manager is working to build consistency across the service.

Managers are present and accessible and staff feel well supported. When describing the leadership, one member of staff said that, 'It feels like I'm being listened to'. Staff report a positive culture in the home. One staff member described an ethos of strong teamwork and mutual support, stating that they can rely on each other and on leaders during challenging periods.

The manager has ensured that there are strong and established links with external agencies; these help to form an effective team around each child. This collaborative approach ensures that professionals share information, coordinate support and respond consistently to each child's needs.

Staff receive regular supervision; they believe that they are listened to and that their views are valued. Staff report that managers respond quickly to any requests for training and development; these have included specific training based on the individual needs of the children in their care.

There has been one complaint since the last inspection. However, this complaint was not acknowledged by managers as a complaint and, as a result, was not investigated or responded to in line with the organisation's procedure.

The home's monthly monitoring reports are completed and submitted to Ofsted and other relevant professionals at regular intervals. However, the independent visitor has not always been able to access the home's recording system. This means that they have not always been able to ensure sufficient oversight of the quality of care provided. This has not effectively been addressed by the organisation.

The registered manager's oversight is mostly effective and they ensure that staff maintain appropriate records. However, on some occasions, language in these records is not consistently child centred and constructive, specifically when staff feel challenged.

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 registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (3)(d)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that consistent agency staff are recruited safely.	6 April 2026
Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must establish a procedure for considering complaints made by or on behalf of children. The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (1) (3))	6 April 2026
The registered person must ensure that— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	6 April 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person makes a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: SC045408

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Surrey County Council, Woodhatch Place, 11 Cockshot Hill, Reigate RH2 8EF

Responsible individual: Samantha Heighes

Registered manager: Nicola Sharp

Inspectors

Sonata Brisley, Social Care Inspector
Ben Wilson, Social Care 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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