

# SC056259

Registered provider: Pebbles Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private organisation. The home provides care for up to six children with emotional needs and social difficulties.

Three children were living in the home at the time of inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2022.

### Inspection dates: 29 and 30 June 2023

|                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>good</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                                             |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | good |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|

|                                           |      |
|-------------------------------------------|------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | good |
|-------------------------------------------|------|

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 24 January 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            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 24/01/2023      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 11/01/2022      | Full            | Good                            |
| 06/03/2020      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness         |
| 15/10/2019      | Full            | Good                            |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

The manager and staff work hard to develop positive relationships with children. One social worker commented on a child's growth in confidence and positive relationships since they have lived in the home. This means that children make progress due to the support and influence of the adults who care for them.

Children are supported through a therapeutic parenting approach. The staff make good use of their psychological services to help to deliver individualised care for children. This helps staff to support children to understand their experiences and how they impact on their emotional well-being.

Staff work well with children's families and support familial relationships. One parent described being 'very satisfied with how they look after [Child's name]'. Another parent said that staff 'keep me up to date and let me know what is happening'. Children benefit from the positive influence of staff. This helps them to develop their relationships with their parents and families.

Children's engagement with education, skills or training is mixed. Some children struggle to understand the importance of education and have stopped attending their school or college. Staff work hard to advocate for children and offer alternative forms of education and educational activities. This helps children to continue to learn and develop skills that will help them as they become more independent.

Staff support children to attend health appointments, and advocate for them in those appointments. For example, the manager helped one child to speak with health professionals to explain issues they were having with their medication. Staff work with children to raise their awareness about why attending their health appointments is important. This reinforces to children that their health and well-being are important to staff.

Children are welcomed into the home sensitively after a period of well-planned introductions. Children start to develop relationships with staff and other children at an early stage. This helps children to adjust to living in a new home with other children.

The manager and staff know the children well. They understand what progress children make while in their care and how to access support when necessary. The team work together to ensure that children receive continuity of care. This means that children are cared for by known adults.

When children move out of the home, their transition is managed and supported by the staff. This helps to ensure that it is a positive experience for them. Staff contribute to children's plans and play a pivotal role in supporting them. Children

stay in touch with staff, and this reflects the positive nature of the relationships built between them.

The property has been refurbished, including a newly fitted kitchen and carpets on the lower ground floor. However, two of the children's bedrooms need to be cleaned and repairs made to furniture. Some areas of the home still appear tired, although the manager has plans to improve the physical environment of the home to make it more homely for children.

Staff routinely lock the pantry door as a way of controlling and monitoring children's access to food. This action is not assessed as necessary within risk assessments or care plans. Furthermore, this restriction does not support children to learn about positive lifestyles or make healthy choices. This restriction impacts all children in the home.

The home has alarms in place on the children's bedroom doors and external doors. The front door alarm is activated at night to let staff know if a child has left the building, and there is a policy in place for its use. However, managers have not sought consent for the use of this alarm from the children's placing local authorities. It is therefore unclear whether professionals are aware of this monitoring.

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

Staff take quick and appropriate action when there are safeguarding concerns. Staff have a good understanding of how to keep children safe in the home and the community.

Managers have formed effective working relationships with local authorities, designated officers, and other agencies. Professionals said that staff communicate their concerns and worries about children quickly and clearly. This keeps professionals informed daily of any concerns or risks to children.

Children receive support from staff to help them to understand their feelings and manage their behaviour appropriately. Individual sessions take place with children when there are concerns about a child's behaviour or potential risks. Staff focus on positive behaviours and use rewards to reinforce children's learning. This helps children to learn to manage risks, such as internet safety, bullying or the safe use of phones.

Managers complete an assessment when considering a new child moving in to the home. This allows managers to explore how this may impact on each child, and considers the ability of staff to meet the competing needs of the children. This means that all children are thoughtfully considered when welcoming new children to the home.

Physical interventions rarely take place in the home. All staff are trained to use effective de-escalation techniques and will only use a physical intervention as a last resort. All incidents are recorded well, but one incident of physical intervention did

not have management oversight. This could limit learning from what has happened, to better improve care for children.

Incidents of children going missing from the home are also rare. The home has policies in place to guide staff practice. Staff will actively search for a child to locate them at the earliest opportunity. However, on one occasion, staff did not follow a child's missing from home risk assessment. This may have limited opportunities to safeguard the child effectively.

Children's risk assessments are detailed and provide information about children's risk behaviours and vulnerabilities. However, managers do not ensure that all known risk factors are included in children's risk assessments. Consequently, staff may not have access the information about concerns for children to enable them to manage and reduce risks.

When bedroom searches are undertaken, the rationale for undertaking them is appropriate. However, the records do not demonstrate that children are informed of these in advance or whether consent is sought. It is also not evident if children are given the opportunity to be present during searches of their private space.

The home has arrangements in place to safeguard children, staff and visitors should there be a fire within the home. However, one fire door did not close properly, and fire extinguishers were not easily accessible throughout the home. This was corrected immediately, but is a repeat shortfall from the previous inspection. The safety of both children and staff is compromised when fire safety equipment is not in place or in good working order.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The home is managed by an experienced manager, supported by a deputy and a stable staff team. This helps to ensure that the home is providing consistency or care to the children.

All staff have completed mandatory training, and records of completed training are kept up to date. The manager also sources training that is specific to the individual needs of children. This means that staff are able to learn the skills and knowledge to provide care that meets the needs of the children.

Staff said that they feel supported by their manager. Supervision takes place regularly and the record of this is detailed. Staff supervision is child focused and includes reflective practice to help staff to develop their practice. Staff have appraisals every six months to review their fitness for their role and identify further areas for development.

Regular team meetings give staff the opportunity to discuss the children and what is happening in their lives. This enables staff to reflect on their practice and explore changes to children's risk assessments and care plans. This helps managers to evaluate staff practice and support the team to develop their practice.

Managers utilise monitoring systems to track children's progress. Monthly reports for each child help managers and staff to understand what has been achieved during that period. However, the manager's oversight of children's records is not always documented, and not all records are signed by the author.

New staff benefit from an induction programme to support them in learning their role. Once the induction is completed, staff are enrolled to complete the necessary qualification. One member of staff has not achieved the required qualifications within the relevant timescales. This is a repeat shortfall from the previous inspection.

Leaders and managers have a statement of purpose that reflects the care provided in the home. However, some of the required information was not included in the document. This means that local authorities, children, and their families are not provided with the information they require.

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

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply within the given timescales.

| Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Due date       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v))</p>                                                                                       | 11 August 2023 |
| <p>After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must—</p> <p>take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home. (Regulation 25 (1)(a))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that fire extinguishers are available to use in all parts of the building in case there is a fire in the home and that fire doors close securely when activated.</p>                                                  | 11 August 2023 |
| <p>The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if—</p> <p>the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children;</p> <p>the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance;</p> <p>the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(b)(d))</p> | 11 August 2023 |

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| <p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform.</p> <p>For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—</p> <p>the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or</p> <p>a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.</p> <p>The relevant date is—</p> <p>in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home.<br/>(Regulation 32 (1) (3)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a))</p> | <p>11 August 2023</p> |
| <p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which—</p> <p>are kept up to date; and</p> <p>are signed and dated by the author of each entry.<br/>(Regulation 35 (1)(b)(c))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p>11 August 2023</p> |

## Recommendations

For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. This specifically relates to the condition of the children's bedrooms and the repairs that are required. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)



- The registered person should ensure that children are able to access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. Limits on privacy and access may only be put in place to safeguard each child in the home (regulation 21(c)(i)). Any decisions to limit a child's access to any area of the home and any modifications to the environment of the home, must only be made where this is intended to safeguard the child's welfare. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child's needs, be properly recorded, and be kept under regular review. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- The registered manager should ensure that rooms are only searched if the child has been informed or asked for their permission. Children should, ideally, be present. Immediate searching may be necessary where there are reasonable grounds for believing that there is a risk to the child's or another person's safety or well-being. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.20)
- The registered person should ensure that records of restraint are kept and should enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge. The review should provide the opportunity to amend practice to ensure that it meets the needs of each child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)
- The registered person must ensure that the following elements of the workforce plan are included in the statement of purpose: (in accordance with Schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20)) the staffing structure; experience and qualifications of staff; and arrangements for the supervision of staff practice. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.10).

## 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:** SC056259

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Pebbles Care Limited

**Registered provider address:** 2 The Calls, Leeds LS2 7JU

**Responsible individual:** David Hitchen

**Registered manager:** Rebecca Wilson

## Inspectors

Joanne Wallis, Social Care Inspector

Joanna Beal, Social Care Inspector

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