

SC061795

Registered provider: Southern Adolescent Care Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is one of three children's homes operated by a private company. The staff look after children who have experienced loss and trauma in their past, resulting in complex and challenging behaviours.

An education team and qualified therapists support the home. The therapists provide a range of services to young people as a group and, when needed, to individuals. The registered manager has been in post since June 2016.

Inspection dates: 1 to 2 August 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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: 13 September 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/09/2017	Full	Outstanding
28/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
25/10/2016	Full	Good
26/01/2016	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- Any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person must make 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)

In particular, the registered person should consider whether they are satisfied that the independent person identifies and alerts them to issues of concern sufficiently well and suitably evaluates the quality of records. The registered person should also consider whether the independent person makes enough contact with outside agencies and families.

- 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. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

In particular, the registered person should ensure that the staff minimise any safety hazards in the garden effectively.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Staff support children to manage the changes which occur when a new child moves in exceptionally well. When possible, plans are also agreed with children and appropriate adults before a child moves in. These actions result in children settling quickly, families feeling involved in their child's care and the group remaining stable. One parent said, 'This is fantastic; I have never been involved in decisions right from the beginning of my child's placement.'

Most children are making excellent progress in all areas of their development. Where there is a negative change to a child's behaviour, the reasons are explored effectively, and the child is involved in decisions made about how to move forward. A social worker talked about a child being 'a changed person'. He was previously 'chaotic...would not engage with services... [and now] looks so much healthier.'

Strong, trusting relationships exist between adults and children. When new children come to live here, the children take responsibility for helping them to learn what is expected of them. Staff show empathy for children and this in turn has resulted in children showing empathy towards each other. All children spoke positively about the staff. One child said that the best thing about the home is the staff, who are 'committed to looking after us well'. He appreciated that staff recognised them as teenagers, not little children, which helped him to listen to their advice. Another child was really positive about the ways the staff helped them to have fun.

Children's educational needs are identified and met well. Children are encouraged to have individual ambitions, which has resulted in one child quickly re-engaging with his education after not attending for several years and two others working towards and gaining eight GCSEs each. A few children do not yet receive 25 hours education a week, but the staff make every effort to improve this. They challenge local authority plans, provide them with detailed information about schools in the area and provide assessments of a child's needs. If children are struggling, they provide additional educational support.

Therapeutic services are an integral and very successful part of this home. These services support children with individual and group therapy sessions, which occur twice a week. Therapists devise bespoke training to support the staff to continually develop and extend their understanding of therapeutic care.

Children's relationships with important people are promoted well. One parent said that she felt positive about how the staff had involved her in decisions, which had not occurred in any other home her son had lived in. Plans are individual to each child and the staff support their implementation accurately.

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

Children, parents and professionals speak highly of the staff's abilities to safeguard children. The staff proactively respond to concerns and can adapt their knowledge to a variety of diverse concerns. Staff challenge others if they consider that actions are not being taken quickly enough.

to protect children's welfare.

Records of how the home has managed safeguarding concerns are documented extremely well. The records provide a detailed factual picture of what occurred and how the concern has been managed. The chronology of events is carefully recorded and regularly updated.

Children get on well and there are very few arguments between them. If these do occur, the staff stop them from escalating effectively. One child said that although he has not been restrained, he saw staff doing this appropriately and he was able to describe what holds they should use.

Children feel able to talk to the staff about concerns, which the staff act on appropriately. The regular discussions between children and staff are recorded very well. Staff take every opportunity to discuss a range of subjects which are pertinent to each child's life. These ongoing discussions have supported children to make positive changes in their lives.

If children go missing, staff follow well thought-out procedures which are tailored to each individual child. This has positive results. One child who was frequently absent from their home no longer absconds after living here for only a very short time. Immediate work was done with the local police to set up a comprehensive safety plan for another child who has increased the number of times they go missing. The plan has resulted in the child being found quickly.

Staff appropriately identify health and safety matters in the home; however, they pay less attention to the safety of the garden where several areas needed to improve. These issues were rectified during the inspection and plans made to increase staff's vigilance in this area.

There is a detailed policy on the use of CCTV in the home. Decisions about its ongoing use are regularly reviewed and records of any instances when it is viewed are clear and reflect the reasons given in the policy. However, television monitors are often left on throughout the day and reasons for this are not recorded.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders and managers support the staff to meet children's needs exceptionally well. They act as good role models for children and staff, carefully monitor care practice and are effective in checking that the staff have the right knowledge and abilities to meet children's needs.

Continuous improvements which focus on children's progress and experiences are sought at every opportunity. Leaders and managers:

- have helped staff to record consistently well
- have improved the quality of information they obtain to decide what impact a new child might have
- are developing more opportunities for children who find education difficult to gain recognised qualifications.

Many professionals confirm that the staff work extremely well with them. A local authority praised the staff for the level of scrutiny given to deciding that the home was not suitable for a child.

Others were positive about the level of communication that the staff had with them and the quality of reports provided.

Staff training is effective. It supports the staff to respond well to children, helps them to work as a cohesive team and promotes their interest and curiosity in the best ways to respond to the children whom they care for. In-house staff training covers children's needs well. The programme is continuously revised to include up-to-date relevant training that reflects the needs children have. Staff value the professional, supportive environment that managers create and enjoy coming to work.

Staff are completing an appropriate qualification, but some staff have limited time to complete this within the given timescales. Leaders and managers' plans indicate that they will have ensured that the staff are all completing a qualification within two years by December 2018.

Supervision and appraisals meet staff's needs, happen regularly and provide good opportunities for self-reflection, debate and review of children's needs. Managers use a variety of methods for recording supervisions, which means that some detail is more available than others. This was discussed with the responsible individual during the inspection. She confirmed that they are undertaking a review of supervision arrangements, but this is not yet concluded.

Systems for monitoring and reviewing are mainly clearly documented and work well. The monthly visits by the independent person take account of a range of issues. However, the visitor infrequently contacts outside agencies or children's families to gain their views about the home or evaluates the quality of records. She had not picked up the issues about garden safety.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC061795

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Southern Adolescent Care Services Ltd

Registered provider address: Room 8, Worth Corner, Turners Hill Road, Pound Hill, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 7SL

Responsible individual: Sharon Webster

Registered manager: Sharon Jenner

Inspector

Ruth Coler, social care inspector

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