

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.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since June 2016.

Inspection dates: 8 to 9 October 2019

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: 1 August 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/08/2018	Full	Outstanding
13/09/2017	Full	Outstanding
28/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
25/10/2016	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

In particular, independent monitoring reports should include analysis and actions to support improvement at the home.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Staff focus on creating relationships that prioritise affection, care and support for children. Children say that staff are absolutely the best thing about the home. Professionals, parents, children and staff all say that staff have created a 'family home'. One parent said it was 'absolutely 10 out of 10'. She said that 'any child placed at Gales is fortunate to find a place where they will be cared for expertly'.

The quality of care and support planning is excellent. Children have detailed care plans with clearly defined targets and goals. Staff make excellent progress with highly complex children. Children have been provided with the stability and structure they need to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Children and staff enjoy playful and warm relationships. However, staff respect professional boundaries and have clear expectations for children's behaviour.

During the inspection, a new child arrived at the home. Staff did superb work to comfort the child when they were frightened and feeling out of control. Staff work consistently to a clear ethos that everyone shares.

One-to-one work is helpfully described as 'chats with children'. These sessions are recorded and are full of affirmation and positive regard for children. Staff give clear messages when these are needed. This helps children to understand and respect boundaries.

Staff place a strong emphasis on educational attainment. Children achieve great outcomes. Staff are supported in this work by a dedicated education team; this team ensures that children receive high-quality in-house education. The team also strives to find the best possible external education placements that meet children's individual

needs. Staff work closely with children to provide continuous support as they take their first steps into new schools and colleges.

Staff demonstrate a great capacity to reflect. In team discussions, they constantly review their practice and try to understand the meaning of children's behaviours. Staff use the home's clinical team very effectively to support this approach. The clinical team keeps up to date with the most innovative thinking and practice in relation to supporting the emotional well-being of children in care.

Children speak highly of the care and support they receive at the home. They feel listened to and valued, and they participate fully in decision-making about their day-to-day lives. Children give lots of examples of the opportunities that they have to contribute to projects and discussions about the home. Children also say that feedback from senior staff is excellent. Children are kept up to date on progress in relation to issues they have raised. This ensures that the service is shaped by the experiences of the children who live in the home.

Children have a clear understanding of the objectives of their placements. They feel fully involved in their own plans. Children say that staff always keep them up to date on progress and discuss any changes to their plans. This helps children to engage with the support provided to them and helps them to make progress.

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

Staff understand the risks and vulnerabilities relating to each child. They progress actions to manage and reduce risks to children to a very high standard. Their use of 'team around the child' networks is exceptionally strong and well developed. There are plentiful examples of staff bringing people together to form a safety net at times of heightened risk to very vulnerable children.

Staff are realistic about not always being able to provide the right placement for every child. However, even when placements have ended, this is handled sensitively and with great compassion. As a result, staff maintain positive communications with some children who have moved on to new placements.

One child said that staff 'never give up on a child'. He said that even when things are very challenging, the staff will fight hard to make it work.

Staff approach safeguarding practice with diligence and precision. Their reporting is of a high standard and they maintain superb chronologies. Actions and outcomes in relation to incidents of concern are clear. They evidence excellent joined-up thinking with other agencies to safeguard children. Children are also taught how to keep themselves safe. Where appropriate, they are encouraged to undertake some of the same training courses as staff in areas such as e-safety, child exploitation, knife crime and radicalisation.

Staff have a very good understanding of the need to maintain an age-appropriate approach to risk. Staff follow risk management strategies for children that are robust

without being overly restrictive for children. This allows children to take reasonable risks in order to increase their experiences and develop independence.

The whole team has a consistent positive behaviour management approach. The team uses a well thought-out blend of incentives and rewards. This system is simple for young people to grasp and motivates them to achieve.

Staff ensure that boundaries and expectations are clear. Staff provide a unified and consistent approach which yields rapid results in de-escalating situations. This also promotes more long-term positive changes in children's behaviour.

Children say that they feel safe and have absolute trust in the staff team to support them, even in the most challenging of times.

Recruitment practice is robust. However, on two occasions, the manager had agreed that newly appointed staff could visit the home before their Disclosure and Barring Service results had been received. Although in these instances the staff were closely supervised at all times, this is not best practice.

Independent monitoring reports sometimes lack analysis and actions to develop practice at the home. This is a missed opportunity to further improve the service.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager has a strong and ambitious vision for the service. She expects the best from her team. Staff are happy to work to these expectations as the registered manager inspires and motivates them with great enthusiasm and skill.

Children, staff, parents and professionals are full of praise and admiration for senior leaders at the home and throughout the organisation as a whole. They described the registered manager as 'deeply caring' and 'a very strong advocate for the children in her care'.

The registered manager constantly role-models best practice to the team. She is regularly out 'on the floor', leading by example.

The whole senior team shares common goals. Members of the team use a common language in their approach to care. The strong ethos of the organisation supports staff to provide consistent and effective care for children.

The registered manager has a highly developed insight into the home's strengths and weaknesses. The home's development plan is full of ambitious goals to further improve practice.

Staff praise the excellent levels of support and training they receive. The registered manager has created a training programme that goes way beyond mandatory requirements. Staff have regular access to tailored courses that support them in their

work with children. Staff also engage in innovative programmes relating to therapeutic work with children. Newly inducted staff demonstrate high levels of knowledge and confidence which exceed what might be expected at such an early stage in their careers.

Positive feedback from external professionals exemplifies the proactive approach that the registered manager has to effective partnership working.

The registered manager places the child's voice at the front and centre of everything that happens in the home.

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

Peter Jackson, 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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