

SC061795

Registered provider: Southern Adolescent Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private company. It provides care and accommodation for up to six children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, including children who have experienced loss and trauma.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since June 2016.

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: 18 to 19 May 2021

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: 8 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/10/2019	Full	Outstanding
01/08/2018	Full	Outstanding
13/09/2017	Full	Outstanding
28/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children make exceptional progress at this home. They receive a high standard of care which is underpinned by an ethos that focuses on understanding needs and individuality. Managers and staff know the children well and have a good awareness of their individual likes, dislikes and vulnerabilities.

Staff members are attentive to and familiar with individual children's routines and their education timetables. Children benefit from a structured environment and planned activities. Children access an excellent range of educational opportunities and recreational facilities to support their learning and develop their confidence.

Children benefit from being supported by a multidisciplinary team. The home has access to a humanistic therapist who provides direct support and training to both children and staff. This collective knowledge and expertise are used to develop meaningful and effective care plans for children. These plans contain individualised strategies for meeting the children's needs. Staff use these strategies to good effect. For example, one child who has a history of involvement with gangs and criminal exploitation has been supported to understand the associated risks and develop behaviours which help keep them safe.

Children thrive in this home. They are treated with dignity and respect by staff and their individuality is celebrated. The independent reviewing officer for one child stated that he is extremely pleased with how the home looks after this child and supports her to understand and contribute towards her care plan.

Staff plan for and support children's transitions well, which promotes a sense of stability and security. Throughout their time at the home, children develop a range of skills in preparation for independence and their transition to adult life.

The procedure for administering medication is safe and monitored frequently. Children's healthcare plans are clear and updated in a timely way. There is an effective system to ensure that staff are kept informed of any changes in children's healthcare needs. Children have access to a variety of healthy and nutritious foods. They enjoy mealtimes together by sitting at the dining table with staff and discussing the day's activities.

Staff have worked tirelessly to ensure that the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on the children's well-being has been kept to a minimum. They have been creative with their approach in supporting children to remain active and motivated within the home. As lockdown restrictions have eased, children have benefited from participating in activities in the community. This has promoted the development of even stronger relationships between children and staff.

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

Children's well-being and safety are prioritised and embedded in practice. Senior leaders undertake regular safeguarding audits. This is indicative of a strong safeguarding culture which recognises the vulnerabilities of the children. Audit activity identifies any strengths or weaknesses in staff practice and provides assurance that staff are working in a manner consistent with the ethos of the home. The designated officer spoke positively about safeguarding practice in the home.

Staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities to safeguard children. They are familiar with how to escalate safeguarding concerns and the expectations regarding maintaining detailed records. Children's risk assessments and risk management strategies used by staff are clear and up to date. Staff engage with a range of professionals to develop behaviour management strategies that protect children from harm. These strategies are individual and relevant to the needs of each child. They provide clear guidance for staff to follow in the event of safeguarding concerns. This promotes consistency in staff safeguarding practice.

Children benefit from close relationships with their key workers. The home's approach to behaviour management is highly effective. Changes in children's behaviour are quickly identified and managed positively. Physical intervention measures are rare. Records of incidents and staff responses to them are detailed and kept under review to identify any emerging patterns and trends.

Staff clearly understand the risks and respond effectively to children who go missing from the home or engage in self-harming behaviours. Excellent safeguarding practice means that children have a strong sense of safety and well-being.

Children's bedrooms are well maintained and personalised to their own individual taste. Staff support children to respect their environment and look after their personal belongings. Leaders and managers respond promptly to health and safety recommendations to ensure that the home remains free from hazards. The home has CCTV cameras strategically placed around the home to ensure the children's safety. Staff monitor the CCTV following incidents. However, these cameras significantly impact on the home's domestic appearance.

Recruitment practices are safe and understood by the managers and staff responsible for this area. Staff interview processes explore new applicants' motivations for working with vulnerable children and their understanding of safeguarding. This reduces the potential for unsuitable adults to be employed at the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is appropriately qualified and very experienced. She demonstrates exceptional leadership. A competent and experienced deputy manager supports her to manage the home effectively. The leadership team has put into

place a staff structure that works extremely well. Children identify staff as their close family. Children form strong attachments and feel safe and secure in the home.

The leadership team has made effective use of the Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards. These have been embedded into the planning, structure and the care that staff provide to the children. There are strong systems in place for monitoring the quality of care being provided. There is a meticulous examination and monitoring of how well the quality standards are being met. As well as the safeguarding audits, managers and team leaders observe staff practice and provide feedback within the supervision and appraisal process. Supervision is regular and meaningful and supports staff to reflect on their practice. There is a culture of continuous reflection, development and improvement at the home.

Children's individual placement plans are formatted around the quality standards. These give a clear picture of how to care for each child. Effective systems are in place for communication between staff on different shifts. This means that children are provided with a consistent level of care and support.

Staff undertake professional development in the therapeutic model the home adopts. They demonstrate a thorough understanding of the principles of care for children who may have experienced rejection or trauma. Staff report that they are well led and supported by managers and each other. New staff speak positively of their induction. Succinct care plans, risk assessments and behaviour support strategies underpin their training in supporting children in the home.

The registered manager is dedicated to improving the lives of the children who live at the home. She is committed to ensuring that there is a stable staff team. The leadership team is meticulous in its approach to considering referrals to the home, and the impact on the dynamics of the existing group of children. They are confident when turning down new referrals for children if their professional judgement indicates that there is a potential conflict.

Leaders and managers have a visible presence in the home. They are available to both staff and children to ensure that the very best quality of care is delivered.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meet the needs of its 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)

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: SC061795

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Southern Adolescent Care Services Limited

Registered provider address: Room S10 Worth Corner, Turners Hill Road, Pound Hill, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 7SL

Responsible individual: Sharon Webster

Registered manager: Sharon Jenner

Inspector

Paul Thomas, Social Care Inspector

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