

SC061795

Registered provider: Southern Adolescent Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to six children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since March 2023 and is suitably qualified.

At the time of this inspection, there were two children living in the home.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 June 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

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

Date of last inspection: 14 June 2022

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
14/06/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
18/05/2021	Full	Outstanding
08/10/2019	Full	Outstanding
01/08/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children and staff have recently been through a difficult period of several high-risk incidents for two children who recently moved into the home in short succession. This has resulted in both children's placements ending with one child having moved on already. The risks were unforeseen in children's care planning due to the behaviours being new for both children. Senior leaders took immediate action to mitigate risks for children and staff while escalating their concerns to the children's placing authorities.

The staff have built strong bonds and trust with the children while forming relationships. The children feel that they can open up to staff and demonstrate they respect boundaries more consistently because of these relationships. Consequently, children are making progress.

There are regular house meetings for children to be able to express their views. The registered manager has oversees these meetings and reviews them for their effectiveness. The children are also encouraged to share their views on the development of the home and any changes they would like. For example, one child requested that the window restrictors are removed from the bedroom windows. Action has been taken to facilitate this, which shows an individualised approach to children.

Staff support children with their general health needs. Where there are any concerns, specialist support is sourced. Staff have regular discussions with children about being healthy and encourage an active lifestyle.

The children's progress in education is mixed. However, where a child may not be attending formal education, the staff encourage creative learning at home while managers escalate this to the local authority to find a suitable school.

The staff ensure that children have regular opportunities to discuss their thoughts and feelings during regular key-work sessions. These are closely linked with their current care planning and reflect topics children may be finding difficult, such as relationships or risky behaviours.

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

Following the escalation of some children's unsafe behaviour, senior leaders have taken action to safeguard children. They have used specialist support guidance and escalated their concerns to children's placing authorities.

The staff are proactive when children go missing from home and follow risk plans in place to support children during this time. Following children's return to the home, discussions take place between staff and the children to explore these incidents.

Plans are updated to reflect any additional information that may be helpful in future events to support children to return home.

There are risk plans in place for children who may raise allegations against staff to ensure that children are listened to and safeguarded. Staff have all received training relating to safeguarding children and are confident in the action to take if they have a safeguarding concern.

The staff have reflected on the recent impact of the dynamics between children. Some staff feel that they could implement stronger boundaries with children and have started to implement different boundaries with the children. This has led to children making progress, such as not going missing from the home as frequently. This demonstrates how the staff are learning from practice to improve the lives of the children they care for.

Senior leaders have taken action to report allegations made by children and follow consultation from the local authority safeguarding team in managing any allegations. However, the provider's disciplinary policy regarding action to take in the event of an allegation to safeguard children and staff has not been followed consistently.

There are shortfalls in the recruitment processes to ensure that agency staff have been suitably vetted, such as ensuring that overseas checks are carried out for agency staff. Action was taken during the inspection to rectify this and the vetting process for all agency staff has been reviewed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager is a strong advocate for the children and their care experiences. Leaders and managers have taken action to review the day-to-day monitoring of the home to drive improvement and have further plans to develop this.

Children's social workers are very positive about the care provided by staff. When there have been concerns about children's behaviour, these have been escalated to children's social workers and managed professionally.

Staff feel supported by the senior management team and each other. They have regular formal and informal supervision. There are regular opportunities for training and development for staff. However, staff with additional learning needs have not been provided with the support to develop in their role.

On some occasions, the staff have needed to use restraint to keep children safer. This has been done sensitively and as a last resort. However, records do not clearly show that the children and staff have been spoken to by someone not involved in the incident or that this information has been reviewed to show that the record is accurate. This independent scrutiny is particularly important when managers are involved in these incidents to ensure an open culture.

Reports required under the regulation to review the quality of care have not been completed and sent to the regulator in a timely manner as required. This hinders the regulator's oversight of children's care experiences and how the registered provider has reviewed these.

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, 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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vii)(e)) This specifically relates to the disciplinary policy processes in the event a child makes an allegation.	31 July 2023
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(b) (3)(d)) In particular, the registered provider should ensure that they obtain all relevant checks in relation to agency staffing.	31 July 2023

The registered person must prepare and implement a policy (“the behaviour management policy”) which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children’s home. 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 (1)(a) (3)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) In particular, the registered person or other person authorised must make a record of discussions with the child and the user of the measure and sign the record to confirm that it is accurate.	31 July 2023
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children (“a quality of care review”) at least once every 6 months. The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed. (Regulation 45 (1) (4)(a))	31 July 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. This specifically relates to any staff who may have additional learning needs. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 53, paragraph 10.1)

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: Maybrook House, Second Floor, Queensway,
Halesowen, West Midlands B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Michelle Callard

Registered manager: Sarah Chaston

Inspectors

Sara Stoker, Social Care Inspector
Ashley Edwards, Social Care Inspector

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