

SC063895

Registered provider: Castle Homes Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children. The provider states in their statement of purpose that they provide care for children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The home is led by an experienced manager.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 January 2022

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 **good**

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

Date of last inspection: 4 December 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/12/2019	Full	Outstanding
04/02/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10/04/2018	Full	Good
30/01/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children are happy. They benefit from having very stable placements. The children are compatible with each other because of careful matching undertaken by the manager. The children value the staff and each other. They achieve vastly improved outcomes because of the care provided by the dedicated staff team.

Staff have high aspirations and ambition for each child. Strong relationships between the home and schools provide children with the continuity they need. This promotes progress, as it meets the holistic needs of the children.

Healthy living is a feature of the home. A dedicated housekeeper ensures children enjoy healthy, home-cooked and nutritious meals. Staff promote sport and active lifestyles. Good health is underpinned by regular medical and health checks. The manager and staff quickly take action to help children with any health issues.

The home managed children's recreational activities in line with the COVID-19 pandemic guidelines. Children and staff took part in a programme of stimulating activities and trips. This supports children's social, physical and emotional development and leads to children having improved self-confidence.

Staff understand and support children's social and individual identity needs. Staff support children to take part in charitable and community projects. This shows children have opportunities to celebrate issues of importance.

Children are valued and the home environment reflects this. The home is very clean and there are high standards of decoration and furnishings. The exterior and interior of the home have very child-focused areas. The views and needs of the children have been put first in the design and decoration of their home.

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

Safeguarding children is of paramount importance to the manager and staff. Involved professionals confirm there is good safeguarding practice by the staff. Children report that they feel safe and that staff teach and support them to keep themselves safe.

From their admission to the home, children's risks and vulnerabilities are understood by staff. Staff review risk assessments, which are adapted when needed to reflect the changing and dynamic nature of risk. This means that when risks reduce for children, they gain a higher level of independence.

Behaviour management is very effective. There have been no physical interventions. Sanctions are rarely used in this home. Staff are consistent in care practice. This promotes a stable and secure environment.

Children have, at times, gone missing. Measures to prevent these incidents have not been effective. The registered manager has not ensured routine multi-agency strategy meetings have been held. This fails to provide strategies to reduce risk. Children have not had return interviews with an independent person following a missing-from-care incident. This is a missed opportunity to listen to the child about their reasons for going missing. However, over time, incidents of children going missing from the home have reduced. This is because of the strong relationships between staff and children and the focused efforts of staff to reduce these incidents.

Recruitment records for residential staff show attention to detail. They show clear vetting and safe recruitment practices taking place. However, recruitment records for non-residential staff are not of the same standard.

Safeguarding incidents are rare. However, when safeguarding concerns have arisen these have not always been promptly reported to the designated safeguarding officer and Ofsted. This limits external examination of safeguarding practice to ensure that children are being safeguarded.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There have been changes in the leadership and management of this home. An experienced manager and responsible individual provide good leadership. They have a shared ethos in supporting children to reach their individual potential.

During a period when the home had no registered manager, the deputy manager ensured that staff continued to provide children with consistent and excellent standards of care. Staff praised the deputy manager for his support and guidance during this time.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the team has gone above and beyond to support children. Managers and staff have ensured constant care for children who contracted COVID-19. Staff nurtured and cared for children, as a good parent would when children are vulnerable and ill.

Partnership working with other professional agencies is strong. Professionals were unanimous in their praise of the management team and the staff.

Staff enjoy high levels of management support. They receive meaningful and individual professional supervision and regular appraisals of their care practice. However, the deputy and registered manager have not received regular supervision. This means the directors of the organisation cannot ensure the effective monitoring of the managers' performance.

Not all case records contain the required level of information. Statutory documents which outline the care, placement and pathway plans for children are not available. This prevents the managers and staff from having clarity for future care planning for children.

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 care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iii)) This specifically relates to staff working in accordance with the pathway plan prepared by the child's placing local authority detailing steps to help children leave care and move into semi-independent living.	14 February 2022
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)(c))	14 February 2022
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and	14 February 2022

are signed and dated by the author of each entry.
(Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))

Specifically, to ensure the home maintains a copy of any plan for the care of the child prepared by the child's placing authority, and a copy of the placement plan.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should ensure that when a child runs away persistently or engages in other risky behaviours, the registered person, in consultation with the child's placing authority, should convene a risk management meeting to develop a strategy for managing risks to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.32)
- The registered person should ensure that, as set out in regulations 31-33, they maintain good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure the home has a system in place so that all serious events are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate people. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.13)

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: SC063895

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Castle Homes Care Limited

Registered provider address: Fifth Floor, 80 Hammersmith Road, London W14 8UD

Responsible individual: Jack Smallman

Registered manager: Shaun Hicks

Inspector

Amanda Ellis, Social Care Inspector

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