

SC067753

Registered provider: West Sussex County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides care and support for a maximum of 10 children. The home can accommodate children with physical and learning disabilities. The home provides permanent placements and short breaks for children.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2023, and is suitably qualified. At the time of the inspection, the registered manager was absent. The children's home is being supported by an interim manager who has submitted an application to be registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 July 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 3 January 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/01/2024	Full	Good
31/01/2023	Full	Outstanding
22/03/2022	Full	Outstanding
25/09/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This purpose-designed home comprises two separate dwellings, one for children who live at the home and one for children staying for short breaks, each with their own entrance. This means that children living in the home are not impacted by children visiting for short breaks. The children can share some areas, such as an art room and sensory room, so that all can enjoy this space.

The home is spacious and there are lots of lovely areas for the children to relax and play in. The staff have ensured that the children's views are considered in the decoration of the home. For example, children have chosen the wallpaper colours in the communal areas, and for children living in the home, each of their bedrooms is decorated to reflect their personalities. The bedrooms are bright and inviting for children who come for short breaks, and have personal touches for each child when they stay.

The staff have a focus on building strong relationships with the children to support them to make progress. This is especially important in how they support children to develop their individual communication. The children are actively involved in their day-to-day care and decision-making. This is reflected in their care planning and how children contribute to their regular reviews. This is equally the experience for children who stay at the home for their short breaks.

All the children who live at the home are attending full-time education and have made progress. For example, one child who was previously finding it difficult to make the transition from home to school is now able to do this successfully, which has enabled this child to catch up on the time that they had missed.

The staff support children to attend routine health appointments and ensure that care plans guide staff on how to support children's more complex health needs. For example, if a child uses specialist equipment, there are pictures and guides for the staff on how to use these safely and provide consistency for the child.

The staff are ambitious for the children and strive to support them to make progress and achieve their goals. For example, one child is now able to walk to school independently, and another child can complete their personal care routines with minimal support. This has enhanced their dignity and is enabling their skills for future independence.

The children enjoy a wide range of experiences, both in the home and outside. The children share their views on how they would like to spend their time and staff encourage the children to try new and adventurous activities. The children enjoy using the well-equipped gardens and sensory areas in the home, as well as trips to local amenities, camping and holidays abroad. The children who stay for short breaks have well-planned stays and enjoy a wide range of activities of their choosing.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Safeguarding practice is mostly positive and there is a strong safeguarding culture among the staff team and managers. The manager has responded to concerns robustly and implemented actions to reduce risks for the children where this has been necessary. However, managers have not ensured that allegations relating to one child have been referred to the local authority designated safeguarding officer or Ofsted. Action was taken during the inspection to address this and ensure a plan was in place to prevent this from reoccurring.

There is a culture of reflection and learning among the managers and staff to look at how they can adapt their care and practice for children when their emotions and behaviours change. This helps the staff be responsive and child-centred when addressing children's changing needs. The staff support children to understand how their experiences can impact on each other and role model appropriate boundaries as part of their shared living together.

Occasionally, the staff may need to guide or hold children to help them during times of distress. This is always used as a last resort, and in the least restrictive way. Managers ensure children are supported after incidents to check their well-being, and also spend time reflecting with the staff to identify any learning opportunities.

There are continued shortfalls in safer recruitment processes to ensure agency staff are suitably vetted, for example ensuring that reasons for leaving previous employment with children and vulnerable adults are verified. Therefore this requirement will be repeated.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The interim manager has successfully embedded changes that have improved the management oversight and monitoring of children's care. This manager is passionate and committed and supported by an equally dedicated leadership team. Their vision for the children is to live in a home where they are thriving and having new experiences, while being supported to learn skills to support their independence into adulthood. This is clearly demonstrated in the progress the children are making.

There is excellent collaboration with other key professionals and children's families to ensure effective communication and joined-up working for the children. Feedback from professionals and parents is consistently positive and praising of the care, love and support for the children. One social worker said: 'The quality of care for this child is amazing and a complete lifeline for the family,' and another said: 'Since being at the home, the child has really blossomed, and is thriving.'

The staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support from the managers and how they work together as a team. However, not all staff are receiving regular supervision, as outlined in the home's statement of purpose, or annual appraisals. There are still

shortfalls in some staff members' mandatory training records to ensure that all staff have the skills and development for their role. This is not always discussed in staff's supervisions and is a missed opportunity to review staff's learning and development needs.

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, The 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— understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v)(vi)) In particular, the registered provider should ensure that processes are followed in the event that a child makes an allegation and that staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children if they make an allegation.	31 August 2024
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or 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—	31 August 2024

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)(a)(b) (3)(d)) This specifically relates to the safer recruitment processes for agency care staff who work with the children.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c))	31 August 2024
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) In particular, the registered provider should ensure that all staff have up-to-date mandatory training, and that this is reflected in records.	27 October 2024
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))	27 October 2024

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: SC067753

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: West Sussex County Council

Registered provider address: Democratic Services, County Hall, West Street,
Chichester PO19 1RQ

Responsible individual: Hayley Grover

Registered manager: Sharlene Vallance

Inspector

Sara Stoker, Social Care Inspector

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