

SC068803

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and run by a private organisation. It provides care and accommodation for up to four children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

There has been no registered manager since July 2022.

Inspection date: 8 November 2022

This monitoring visit

This visit was carried out due to concerns raised with Ofsted by a whistle-blower and feedback from a local authority department, and following a serious incident reported by the provider which is currently being investigated by the police.

During this visit, the inspector identified serious shortfalls in the care of children.

Children spoke of being bullied by other children in the home. For one child, the inspector was told this occurs almost daily and can include physical and verbal abuse and the use of intimidation by an older child. When this younger child was asked what it is like living in this home, he said, 'I just don't want to be bullied any more.' Another child who has also experienced bullying said, 'The staff are scared, so they don't do anything.'

The inspector identified multiple entries in the daily records that demonstrate incidents of bullying. For example, over a three-week period in August 2022, there were 19 entries regarding bullying incidents between children. This included one child being grabbed, having their hair pulled, hit in the head, sworn at, pushed and made to leave a room they were sitting in so that another child could watch something on the television. In one incident a child was told, 'I hope you die.' In

other records viewed by the inspector, this same child, on different occasions, is head-butted, pinched and has a loaf of bread thrown at them.

The manager has recently taken some action to try to address bullying in the home, such as inviting the local police community support officers to speak with one child. This does not address the experiences of children who have, over an extended period, been continually exposed to repeated bullying. There are significant failures in staff responses to bullying behaviours.

There are shortfalls in communication between the manager and local authority professionals. For example, following a serious incident that led to a police investigation, there was a delay in one child's local authority being informed. Local authority professionals were also unaware that children placed by them were subject to repeated bullying.

Incidents of physical restraint are not always recorded. For example, one record made by a member of staff indicated a child was held to stop them hurting another child. However, no formal record of this was made.

Consequences are not always proportionate or recorded. For example, one note made by a member of staff indicated that a child's toy was withheld from them for several days due to them 'constantly lying'.

Staff have failed to provide effective treatment for one child who required pain relief. This was because the staff on duty, including the home's manager, were not appropriately trained. Despite the child asking twice, they had to wait five hours until a suitably trained member of staff arrived on shift. Consequently, this child was left requiring pain relief for a significant period.

The environment is not kept safe. For example, one child asked the inspector to look at their bedroom. The inspector found that the room is damp, has a stained carpet and there are marks on the walls. Furthermore, the bathroom ceiling has areas of mould. Children are not provided with basic toiletries, such as hand soap and hand towels, in their bathrooms.

Standards of health and safety continue to be poor. Cleaning products which should be locked away are left in reach of the children. Additionally, a maintenance knife was left lying on the floor outside the kitchen back door. Action was taken during the inspection to remove these items.

Due to the departure of several members of staff, the manager is having to work shifts. This has impacted on the manager's ability to have effective oversight of the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/06/2022	Full	Good
11/05/2021	Full	Good
18/02/2020	Full	Outstanding
05/03/2019	Full	Good

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a))	27 December 2022
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. (Regulation 7 (1)(c)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	30 November 2022
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met. (Regulation 10 (1)(a))	27 December 2022
*The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and	27 December 2022

have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them. (Regulation 11 (1)(b)(c) (2)(a)(xii)(xiii))	
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child’s behaviour, in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child’s behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children; that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(xi)(b))	27 December 2022
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.	30 November 2022

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(b)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
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— manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; 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; and that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iv)(v)(vi)(d))	27 December 2022
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;	27 December 2022

demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(a)(g)(ii)(h))	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— 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; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(c)(f)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	30 November 2022
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(a)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	30 November 2022

The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out—

the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home.

The registered person must ensure that—

within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—

the name of the child;

details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;

the date, time and location of the use of the measure;
a description of the measure and its duration;

details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;

the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;

the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and

a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;

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.

27 December 2022

(Regulation 35 (1)(b) (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	
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 are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))	27 December 2022

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should review the use of door alarms for each child to ensure this reflects progress made. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.16)
- Any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person must make a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. This includes obtaining the views of external stakeholders to contribute to the assessment of the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC068803

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Registered provider address: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited, 17 Leigh Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 5EU

Responsible individual: Leslie Davenport

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sara Stoker, Social Care Inspector

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