

SC068803

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private organisation owns and runs the home. It provides care for up to four children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

There has been no registered manager since July 2022.

Inspection date: 29 December 2022

Date of last inspection: 20 June 2022

Judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection:

A compliance notice was issued to the provider under regulation 11, the positive relationships standard.

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We identified the following serious concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection:

- The compliance notice issued to the provider relating to the positive relationships standard, and in particular their approach to addressing bullying, is not met.
- There are continued shortfalls in the staff responses to bullying behaviours.
- Some incidents of bullying are still not recognised and recorded as such.
- This has left shortfalls in action being taken to address some bullying incidents.
- The manager's monitoring systems have failed to recognise these shortfalls.
- A further compliance notice will be served as incidents of bullying in the home continue.

The care of children

There has been a reduction in bullying incidents between children. Children say they feel safer and that bullying has stopped. However, records and incident reports show this is not the case and bullying between children continues in the home.

There is evidence of a range of regular planned and unplanned work undertaken with all children to address the bullying concerns. The manager printed off workbooks for every child that had been produced for Anti-Bullying Week and staff use these resources to engage children in activities to explore this topic.

Staff have regular meetings with children to discuss bullying and how to be kind to each other. This has led to a decrease in incidents between two of the children.

There have been extensive improvements to the interior and exterior of the property. Children chose how they wanted their bedrooms to be decorated and this work has been completed. This has improved the environment for children and provides them with a nice home to live in.

The safety of children

There are shortfalls in practice to protect children from each other. For example, risk plans to keep children separated due to an ongoing police investigation are not always effective. Incident records do not show that effective action is taken to address some of these concerns.

Progress around consequences for children varies. One child's consequence for hurting another child was ineffective. However, the policy to support children's behaviour has been updated and this is being shared with staff.

Staff can show what action they will take if children are unkind to each other. They have benefited from bespoke training in anti-bullying provided by an external provider.

Staff have implemented safe care plans for the two younger children, which have highlighted their vulnerabilities and contributing factors to triggers of bullying. These have been written to complement their care management plans and provide effective strategies for staff to address bullying.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

Communication with children's professional networks has improved and the manager has implemented new systems to ensure this continues to develop. There has been an increase in visits by the independent person, with a focus on bullying incidents, which has included direct discussions with all children.

There are continued shortfalls in the manager's monitoring of all bullying incidents. Records show that not all incidents are recorded as bullying and that no action is taken. Furthermore, there are shortfalls in the manager's oversight to ensure all staff have read and signed children's plans, and to address shortfalls in records made by staff.

Staff training and development are improved and when staff require mandatory training, this is planned. Staff have received bespoke training from the Anti-Bullying Alliance. This training also looked at whistle-blowing and used real examples of incidents and how staff can respond to bullying.

Restraints are recorded appropriately and have sufficient management oversight within the required time frames.

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, 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 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; 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))	12 February 2023
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; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iv)(vi)) In particular, children who present a risk of sexual harm have effective plans to prevent the impact on other children, and that effective action is taken to safeguard children in line with their risk plans.	12 February 2023

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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(h)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	12 February 2023
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*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that any consequences used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. In some cases, it will be important for children to make reparation in some form to anyone hurt by their behaviour and the staff in the home should be skilled to support the child to understand this and carry it out. ('Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)

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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