

SC068827

Registered provider: Surrey 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 for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties. There were four children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The registered manager post has been vacant since 1 January 2025.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 April 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
---	--

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

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

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 12 September 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/09/2024	Full	Good
06/12/2023	Full	Good
07/03/2023	Full	Good
05/12/2022	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Children have made some progress from their starting points, but their experiences vary in quality. Some children are more settled than they were previously, and this is because they have formed positive relationships with staff. However, one child's needs are not fully understood and being met. The child said that they do not like living at the home and they do not always receive the support that they need from staff.

Children feel able to share their views, wishes and feelings with staff. They say that they feel heard, and if a request can't be granted, then the reason for this is explained to them. However, there are shortfalls in the way some complaints from children are managed.

All children are enrolled in education and staff encourage children's participation and attendance. One child is struggling to attend their allocated education provision, and they are benefiting from alternative education arrangements. This is because staff understand the importance of education, and children receive good support from staff in this area.

Staff maximise opportunities for children to spend time with the people who are important to them, and they make sure that arrangements suit children and their families. Some children need to travel long distances and staff ensure that this does not have a negative impact on children. Children and their parents appreciate the staff team's efforts and say that they benefit from having meaningful time together. Furthermore, when it is in children's best interests, staff promote an increase in family time and advocate for children to meet their families without staff being present.

Children receive support to develop the skills that they need to live more independently. There are clear plans that help children to learn important life skills. For example, two children are learning how to use public transport independently. Children also enjoy learning how to cook new meals.

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

Some complaints and allegations made by children about staff have been thoroughly investigated and addressed. The allegations have been shared with external safeguarding professionals and children have received clear feedback about the outcome. However, on one occasion, a child reported emotional abuse by staff members. This was not recognised as an allegation and so the local authority designated officer was not consulted, and it was not reported to Ofsted. This inhibited the regulator's ability to monitor the management response to the safeguarding concern.

Children are helped to understand their own vulnerabilities and they are supported to become increasingly safe. However, there are some indicators that one child is being exploited and these have not been fully investigated. As a result, the child may be at risk of harm when they are using social media or accessing the community.

When behavioural incidents occur, staff make effective use of de-escalation techniques and so the use of physical restraint is rare.

Children only go missing from the home infrequently. When they do go missing, staff take effective action to ensure that the children return home safely and involve the police appropriately. All missing-from-care episodes are followed up with return home interviews by external professionals.

The home is well presented and decorated to reflect children's individual personalities. However, the lounge door is routinely locked at bedtime. This practice is not kept under regular review to ensure that it remains appropriate and proportionate to any risk of children having free access to the lounge.

Most children's care and support plans accurately describe what staff need to do to care for children and keep them safe. However, one child's plan lacks important information about how to address their specific vulnerabilities. The child's parent told the inspector that they were unhappy about some specific aspects of the child's care.

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

There is currently no registered manager at the home. The deputy manager has been acting up into the manager role. They have not received sufficient support from senior leaders to ensure that there is good-quality monitoring of the quality of care being provided to children. The newly appointed responsible individual is very experienced and is passionate about improving the service.

Inconsistent management oversight of the home has led to some incidents not being fully scrutinised to ensure that there was a robust response. Additionally, the manager has not completed a review of the quality of care being provided to children. This means that the manager has not demonstrated that they have a well-rounded view of the experiences of the children and the impact that the care is having on their outcomes.

All staff receive regular supervision. The supervision sessions are reflective and aid staff development. The staff speak positively about the support that they receive from the manager.

All staff have completed the training that is deemed mandatory by the organisation. Additionally, managers regularly invite other professionals to team meetings with the aim of expanding staff knowledge about the roles and responsibilities of those people who are part of children's professional networks.

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 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 the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plans is requested, if— the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child's needs. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(e)(i)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that, when there are indicators that children may be at risk of harm, robust action is taken and that allegations about staff are recognised as such and managed appropriately.	9 June 2025
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— 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	9 June 2025

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(g)(ii)(h))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. A notification made under this regulation— must include details of— the matter; the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter; must be made or confirmed in writing. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e) (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))	9 June 2025
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and	9 June 2025

the registered provider— is an organisation or a partnership; does not satisfy regulation 28; or is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home. If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of— the name of the person so appointed; and the date on which the appointment takes effect. (Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii) (2)(a)(b))	
The registered person must ensure that— children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))	9 June 2025
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. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report").	9 June 2025

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; and

make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home.

The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.
(Regulation 45 (1) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5))

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: SC068827

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Surrey County Council

Registered provider address: Quadrant Court, 35 Guildford Road, Woking GU22 7QQ

Responsible individual: Post vacant

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sonata Brisley, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025