

SC373958

Registered provider: East Sussex County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a local authority. It provides care for up to four children with social or emotional difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since August 2020.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 October 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 **requires improvement to be good**

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

Date of last inspection: 26 May 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection:

A monitoring visit was carried out on 27 January 2022 which resulted in two compliance notices being issued in respect of regulation 12, the protection of children standard and regulation 14, the care planning standard. A further monitoring visit was carried out on 9 March 2022 which concluded that both compliance notices had been met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/05/2021	Full	Outstanding
14/05/2019	Full	Outstanding
25/06/2018	Full	Outstanding
06/09/2017	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress in relation to their starting point across aspects of their welfare.

Managers have ensured that a new child's move into the home has been well supported. Managers provided staff with detailed assessments about how to care for and safeguard the child. This has included consultation with the positive behaviour support service to provide the staff with the necessary guidance to help them to understand the child's communication needs and how they process information. As a result of this bespoke work, the child has settled in well.

Staff support children to understand their journey and give them praise for their accomplishments. For example, staff have created 'positive activities and thrive' folders for each child that capture the child's journey.

Staff show concern for children's welfare and recognise the external influences that can place children at risk. Individualised support means that children begin to make safer decisions and withdraw from negative influences.

Staff effectively challenge barriers that block children from being able to fully participate in education. Consequently, one child is now attending school more regularly and talks positively about their time at school. Another child is pursuing an interest in music and is engaging with professionals to reduce their vulnerability to child exploitation.

Staff work with health professionals to ensure that children's physical and emotional health needs are met. For example, staff have received training on how to administer emergency medication when a child has a seizure.

Staff help children to develop essential life skills. For example, one child is learning to cook.

Although children's bedrooms and some areas of the home are decorated to a good standard, this is not consistent across the whole of the home. For example, the bathroom and hallway require redecoration.

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

Staff understand well the children's individual needs, behaviours and risks.

The registered manager takes a proactive approach to engaging other agencies when there are known concerns for a child's welfare. He liaises with external safeguarding professionals, such as the youth offending team and the children's substance misuse service, to provide the necessary support.

Risk management guidance is comprehensive and captures the concerns for individual children. As a result, staff are equipped with the essential control measures that help to keep children safe.

Physical interventions are now recorded to demonstrate the lead up to the incident and what measures were taken. The registered manager reviews all incidents and considers any trends or learning to inform his monitoring process. There was an occasion when the registered manager was involved in an incident. This was not reviewed by an appointed independent person.

When children go missing from the home, staff take prompt action. Staff follow children's missing-from-care protocols and work closely with the police, social workers and other professionals. This coordinated approach helps to keep children safe.

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

The home is led by an experienced registered manager and his leadership is valued by staff.

Safeguarding issues are generally reported appropriately to external professionals. However, there was one occasion when a child made an allegation that was not immediately reported to the designated officer for the local authority. The registered manager acknowledged that staff had not followed the safeguarding policy and procedures on this occasion.

Staff practice includes the locking of doors to prevent disruption and/or to safeguard children. The registered manager has not analysed and reviewed this practice to demonstrate that this is used only as a last resort, is appropriate and explained in the children's home documents. For example, on one occasion, the decision was made to lock doors so that a child could not leave the premises while waiting to be moved to a new home.

Children are given information and research to help to inform them of the impact of the risks of smoking, substance misuse and drinking alcohol.

A previous recommendation on staff supervision has not been met. The home's policy states that staff should be supervised on a monthly basis. This expectation is not being consistently achieved.

The internal quality assurance processes have improved. The registered manager uses these monitoring processes to continually develop the service. However, external monitoring does not demonstrate constructive challenge to help drive improvement.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(ix)) In particular, ensure that there are clear guidance, policies and procedures in respect of the use of locking doors and that these procedures are reviewed when appropriate.	20 <u>December</u> 2022
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— are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vi))	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	20 December 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of their children. Children's homes will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. This includes ensuring that the bathrooms and hallway are in an acceptable state of repair and decoration. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that records of restraint are kept and should enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or concerns emerge. A person should be appointed to review incidents in which the registered manager is involved. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)
- The registered person should ensure that any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person can 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. The independent person should provide constructive challenge. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

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: SC373958

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: East Sussex County Council, County Hall St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1UE

Responsible individual: Kathy Marriott

Registered manager: Steven Crowe

Inspector

Suzy Lemmy, Social Care Inspector

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