

SC373958

Registered provider: East Sussex County Council

Monitoring visit

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 who are experiencing complex life and developmental challenges.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since August 2020.

Inspection date: 9 March 2022

This monitoring visit

A monitoring visit was undertaken at the home on 27 January 2022 and concerns were identified in relation to the assessment and management of risk and admissions to the home from August to December 2021. Two compliance notices were subsequently issued on 4 February 2022. These were in respect of regulation 12, the protection of children standard, and regulation 14, the care planning standard. The date for meeting the steps in these notices was 6 March 2022. This monitoring visit was undertaken to assess whether the actions specified in the two compliance notices have been addressed.

The compliance notice issued under regulation 12 required the provider to ensure that there were risk management plans in place regarding a tree next to the home's back garden and that there was a risk management plan regarding potential ligature points around the home. The provider was required to ensure that the staff were familiar with these risk management plans and were implementing them in practice. The home's location assessment was also to be reviewed and amended, if necessary, particularly in relation to railway safety.

The registered manager has consulted with the relevant authorities and taken action to minimise the potential for the children to come to harm by climbing the tree next to the back garden, which overhangs a railway embankment. Practical steps are being taken to prevent the children climbing the tree. There is now a risk

assessment in place which provides the staff with clear instructions on the actions they should take if a child does climb the tree.

A comprehensive assessment of potential ligature points in the home and garden has been undertaken by the local authority behaviour management team. The registered manager has used the information in this assessment to complete a detailed risk management plan in relation to children using ligatures to harm themselves.

These risk management plans have been shared with the staff and they have been discussed at a staff team meeting. Individual staff supervision sessions are now being used to emphasise the need to implement the strategies in these plans in day-to-day practice. The staff who were interviewed during this monitoring visit were able to give a clear account of the action they would take if a child were placing themselves at risk of harm by climbing the tree or using a ligature.

The location assessment has been reviewed by the registered manager. More detail has been added regarding local areas which are potentially unsafe for the children to frequent. There is also more detail regarding the nearby railway crossing and how the children could access the railway line. There are strategies for mitigating against the risk and clear instructions for contacting the police in high-risk situations. Reference is also made to the relevance of the children's individual risk assessments, which provide additional strategies for preventing the child coming to harm on the railway line.

The registered manager has been proactive in reducing the potential for the children to trespass on the railway. This has included using resources obtained from the railway authorities in individual work with one child. This has resulted in the child having a greater awareness of the dangers associated with the railway.

The steps specified in this compliance notice have been met.

The compliance notice issued under regulation 14 required the provider to undertake a review of the admissions process for all the children who have moved into the home since August 2021 and identify any learning and actions to be taken. The impact risk assessments for the children currently living at the home were to be reviewed and the provider was required to ensure that impact risk assessments address all known risks, consider the impact on children already living at the home and assess whether the staff can meet the needs of the child moving in.

The registered manager has completed a detailed review of the admissions process for children who moved into the home between August 2021 and December 2021. The associated report identifies shortfalls in the admission process during this period, particularly in relation to assessing the compatibility of the children who moved in. This weakness is being addressed through the development of a new compatibility assessment process.

Managers have plans in place to ensure that compatibility assessments will place more emphasis on matching new admissions with the children already settled in the home. More time will be allocated for planning how a new child will be admitted to the home. This will include the staff and children having more formalised time to discuss potential new children moving in. When a new child is not an ideal match, senior managers will be required to scrutinise the decision-making process. This will ensure more accountability in the overall admissions process.

A new compatibility assessment format has been developed. This format requires the assessor to identify the strategies that will be in place to mitigate against any risks associated with a new child moving into the home. No children have moved into the home since the last monitoring visit, so this new approach has not yet been implemented in practice. However, the changes that are proposed should ensure that more thorough planning takes place prior to a new child moving into the home.

The new format for compatibility assessments prompts the assessor to consider all the known information about the child who has been referred and identify where additional information needs to be obtained. The assessor is also required to analyse whether the staff team has the knowledge and skills required to meet the needs of the child who has been referred.

The impact risk assessments for the children currently living at the home have been reviewed. These identify the risks that were present at the time the child moved in and contain additional information that has come to light while the child has been living at the home. These impact risk assessments anticipate some of the negative consequences of the child moving in which subsequently became a reality.

The steps specified in this compliance notice have been met.

The provider's response to the other requirements and recommendation made at the full inspection in May 2021 and the monitoring visit in January 2022 was not examined during this monitoring visit. Therefore, these have been repeated in this report and will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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

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 registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and 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— details of the child's behaviour leading to 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. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (3)(a)(ii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii))	9 July 2021
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.	6 March 2022

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)(a)(b) (2)(h))

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. This is with particular reference to ensuring that staff supervision and annual appraisals are completed within specified timescales. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: SC373958

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: East Sussex County Council

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

Stephen Collett, Social Care Inspector

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