

SC377702

Registered provider: Holibrook House Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and provides care and accommodation for up to six children. The home's statement of purpose states that the home cares for children who present with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. In addition to having two other children's homes, the company is also a registered education provider.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in January 2018.

Inspection dates: 26 to 27 February 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 11 March 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: Sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/03/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/07/2018	Full	Good
22/03/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
02/08/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

A strength of this home is the way in which staff seek to understand children's needs and behaviours. Before children come to live at the home, the registered manager and staff team seek out information and carefully assess the children's needs. They consider the impact that new children being admitted will have on those children already living at the home. This enables staff to think about what additional resources are needed to meet children's individual needs.

Children settle at this home and find stability which they have often not had in other placements. Staff have high expectations for how children will behave and how they will engage in day-to-day life. Children respond to the care and perseverance of the staff team. The staff's continued support encourages children to engage and feel settled quickly.

The staff team works in close partnership with the team of professionals who are involved with the children. Strong relationships are formed between children and staff which are based on trust, respect and an expectation of mutually positive behaviours. Communication between the staff and parents/carers is well established and meets children's needs.

Children make good progress, and some children are making exceptional progress from their starting points. The staff never give up on supporting children to achieve their goals, and continuously encourage them to be their best and try their hardest. Progress may seem small, but is often significant, such as returning to education after a long absence or attending additional tuition to achieve in exams.

Staff give clear guidance to children, which ensures that children know what the expectations and boundaries are at the home while also feeling valued. Children engage in 'Children's Chat' meetings and know how to complain if they are worried about anything at the home. There is a children's guide which includes the details for the Children's Commissioner. However, some of the advocacy details are out of date and need amending.

Children are expected to attend a school or college placement. When children are excluded from education, they are encouraged to engage in home tuition and other educational activity during school hours. Staff seek to establish structure and routine within the home, and are persistent in their efforts to do so.

Staff prepare healthy food and support children to choose healthy lifestyles by helping them to join a gym or going for regular walks.

Children are expected to learn to take responsibility for themselves with the support of staff. Children are encouraged to learn to cook with staff, and to be involved in choosing food for the shopping list, keeping their own rooms tidy and helping to do their own laundry.

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

Risks are identified well. Assessments are thorough and give the staff clear strategies for managing the complex behaviours of children. Risk assessments are regularly updated, and inform both placement planning and care planning. These assessments identify the children's risks, which assists the staff in finding services that can help and support the children to reduce their risk-taking behaviours.

The staff team works collaboratively with other agencies to reduce the number of incidents in which children go missing from the home. Incidents of missing tend to decrease once children become more settled. Although some children do go missing, the understanding of this from analysis, and from management oversight, allows positive actions to be taken to reduce such episodes.

The risks for children regarding exploitation are well understood by staff members. Various tools are used to document missing episodes. These include individual missing protocols, essential information sharing and regular meetings with the police and placing authorities. Although the home keeps thorough records of missing episodes and actions that staff have taken, these records are not always easily accessible, as they are often kept at other locations.

Boundaries are very clear at this home and staff consistently apply them. Staff expect positive behaviours and encourage children to be respectful and behave with consideration for others. Staff are not afraid to appropriately challenge children, and this helps children to feel safe and secure.

The registered manager has put safeguarding at the centre of this home's practice. Staff are familiar with the safeguarding and whistle-blowing policies and procedures. Staff receive regular update training on safeguarding issues, including all forms of exploitation and the risks surrounding radicalisation and female genital mutilation.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The current manager has been in post since January 2018 and holds the required leadership and management qualification. With the support of the senior leadership team, she has made positive changes to the running of the home. There is greater emphasis placed on staff taking more responsibility for their work and improving the home for children. Effective implementation of these changes has benefited children and driven up standards of individualised care.

Leaders and managers know children well and are positively involved in planning their care and advocating for them when necessary. Regular meetings involving managers and children take place. These help children to discuss their behaviours and decide on strategies that will promote more positive change and increase the stability of their placements.

Staff described feeling supported and noted that they have access to high-quality induction and training. The recruitment process ensures that skilled and able staff are employed who can then be trained to work with children in accordance with the home's ethos, as set out in the statement of purpose. Supervisions and personal

development plans reflect this. Despite this approach, not all staff files showed that employee references had been verified, although overall there is safe recruitment practice.

Leaders and managers are aware of the strengths of the home and have been working on making changes to the areas that need improvement. The three recommendations made at the last inspection have been addressed, which shows the provider's capacity to change.

Monitoring systems help leaders and managers to understand the home's strengths and areas for improvement. An independent visitor visits the home monthly, and provides a written report that includes feedback. These reports are welcomed by the leaders and managers, and have helped them to improve the service.

The registered manager completes her own quality of care review, which is informed by feedback from children as well as external placing authorities and parents. She has systems in place for auditing the progress of children who live at the home, and identifying areas for improvement.

There are established working relationships with commissioners, placing authorities and the wider professional network. This was seen through observations of practice and was gleaned from the feedback that was received during the inspection.

The home is well decorated and furnished throughout. Overall, children have access to a pleasant living environment. However, the downstairs lavatory requires some improvements to ensure that it is safe and functional. This includes ensuring that the sink pedestal is fixed, the lavatory seat repaired and any spare rolls of bin bags are stored appropriately.

The team includes male and female staff members, and is diverse in its mix of experience and cultural, racial and religious backgrounds. Children are taught to respect difference.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Ensure that as set out in regulations 31–33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguard children and minimise potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

Specifically, this relates to ensuring that all references for employees are verified and that responses given are recorded.

- The registered person must ensure that the children in their care understand their rights as a looked-after child, or child living in a children's home. Children must be informed of how to contact the Office of the Children's Commissioner for advice and assistance about their rights and entitlements. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.19)

Specifically, ensure that the details for the Children's Commissioner are recorded in the statement of purpose and the children's guide.

- Some records may be kept electronically (regulation 38) provided that this information can be easily accessed by anyone with a legitimate need to view it and, if required, be reproduced in a legible form. Electronic records should be held at the individual home in accordance with data protection principles. IT systems should ensure the safe storage of these records and business continuity planning should be in place to prevent loss or damage to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 14.2)

Specifically, this relates to organising how records are kept for missing episodes and for incident and restraint records, with the purpose of simplifying systems and avoiding duplication.

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Specifically, this relates to improving the downstairs lavatory to ensure that the sink pedestal is secure, the lavatory seat is mended and the COSHH (control of substances hazardous to health) products are stored in a secure place.

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: SC377702

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Holibrook House Limited

Registered provider address: First Floor, 172 Hoe Street, Walthamstow, London E17 4QH

Responsible individual: Herman Allen

Registered manager: Julee Aiken-Brown

Inspector

Christine Kennet, Social Care Inspector

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