

SC379357

Registered provider: Castle Homes Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run home provides care for up to four children who may have experienced trauma that has left them vulnerable.

There has been no registered manager since September 2022.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 November 2022

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: 15 November 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/11/2021	Full	Good
19/11/2019	Full	Good
19/02/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
04/06/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of the inspection, one child was living at the home. Five children have moved on from the home in the last year. Moves from the home are appropriate and have enabled children to move closer to their families, return to live with their parents or move to alternative care.

Children who move to the home are supported to personalise their bedrooms. This helps the children to feel that they belong, and that the house is their home. One child visited the home to meet staff before he moved in. He chose his bedroom, had lunch with staff and talked about his likes and dislikes. This helped to reduce his anxieties about moving.

Staff are committed to supporting the child now living at the home to rebuild family relationships. The staff enable her to spend time with her grandmother and welcome her parents to the home. This helps the child to maintain family connections and a sense of identity.

Staff build positive, trusting relationships with the child. This has helped the child be more open about how she is feeling and seek support and advice from staff. The child said, 'I can go to staff about anything and they listen. It's different from where I lived before.'

Staff help the child to attend school. The staff liaise with external professionals to ensure that the education plan for the child is relevant and regularly reviewed. However, when the child does not attend school, there are no informal educational activities. This prevents her from being active and motivated.

The home is comfortable and welcoming. The child is encouraged to care for the pet cat. This helps the child to develop animal-care skills and learn about responsibility.

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

The staff are committed to keeping children safe and take appropriate action when incidents occur. The staff know who to contact if they have any safeguarding concerns for a child.

Staff respond to missing-from-home incidents well. They take time to get to know children and recognise when there are signs that children want to leave the home without supervision. One social worker said that the child currently living at the home has not been reported missing to the police since she moved there. This is significant progress for her, as she frequently went missing from her previous home.

The staff help the child to make safe choices in regard to relationships, online safety and child sexual exploitation. The staff work well with external professionals to help

the child make safe choices. One professional said that working with staff was refreshing and that they adapted to the child's needs quickly. As a result, he was able to end his support for the child, in the confidence that staff would continue to keep her safe.

Staff use suitable physical intervention techniques when necessary to keep children and others safe. The manager has oversight of physical interventions to reflect on practice and identify any concerns. However, the staff do not always clearly describe these interventions in the supporting records. This prevents the manager from fully understanding the child's experiences and maintaining critical oversight.

The location risk assessment is reviewed regularly. The information in the risk assessment provides details of the identified risks in the area. However, statistical information relating to child sexual exploitation is not included. Therefore, relevant information on how to mitigate potential risks to children is not fully understood.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager was appointed in September 2022 and is in the process of registering with Ofsted. She has a level 5 qualification and is supported by a deputy manager. The previous registered manager is now the responsible individual.

The manager has established a committed and stable staff team. New staff undertake a thorough induction and are supported well by their colleagues. The staff speak highly of each other and staff morale is good. The staff say that they are supported well by the manager. The staff value the manager's knowledge and her ability to listen to and act on their concerns.

The staff access training in core areas, including first aid, physical restraint and safeguarding. The staff have targeted training to support the individual needs of the children, such as self-harm, post-traumatic stress disorder and child sexual exploitation. All staff have either completed their level 3 qualification or are in the process of doing so. This range of training gives the staff the skills and knowledge for their roles.

Team meetings are regular and provide staff with a forum to share their practice experiences and any concerns that they have for children. Staff say that this has helped them to meet the child's care and welfare needs consistently.

The manager failed to complete a lone-working risk assessment for one child. This prevented staff from fully understanding the risks of lone working with the child and how to mitigate these risks.

The staff value supervision, as it enables them to share concerns and discuss the needs of the children and their own well-being. However, staff supervision is not provided regularly. This does not help staff to achieve the best outcomes for children.

Monitoring systems provide effective oversight of the children's welfare. The manager and the responsible individual respond appropriately to recommendations and concerns identified by the independent person. They are reflective in their approach and are committed to making practice changes.

When children make allegations, the manager usually reports these to the local authority designated officer. However, one allegation made by a child was not acted on. This was identified by the independent person and actioned by the manager. Although this allegation was not specific and lacked details, failing to report this prevents the manager from monitoring any similar concerns.

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 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— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(vi)(vii)) In particular: ensure that lone-working risk assessments are completed; ensure that allegations made by children are responded to in accordance with the home's safeguarding policy.	2 December 2022
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) In particular, ensure that staff supervision is carried out regularly, in line with the home's supervision policy.	16 December 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when children are not participating in education because they have been excluded or for some other reason, that staff support children to sustain or regain their confidence in education by engaging them in suitable structured activities. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. In particular, ensure that physical interventions are clearly described. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home. Specifically, ensure that the assessment is informed by up-to-date crime intelligence related to children's identified vulnerabilities. ('Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

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: SC379357

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Castle Homes Care Limited

Registered provider address: The Forge, Church Street West, Woking, Surrey
GU21 6HT

Responsible individual: Michelle Batchelor

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Laraine Edmondson, Social Care Inspector

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