

SC399222

Registered provider: West Sussex County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides short-term emergency support for children at times of crisis or significant periods of change in their lives. The home provides care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties. Three children were living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2026.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 May 2026

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: 13 May 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/05/2025	Full	Good
16/07/2024	Full	Good
18/09/2023	Full	Good
24/08/2017	Full	Good

Summary of findings

Children benefit from warm, nurturing and personalised care. They feel safe and valued from the moment they arrive. Children make progress and staff provide consistent, child-centred support that reflects children's individual needs and interests. Safeguarding practice is generally strong, and staff are committed to children. Leaders understand the home well and use children's views to drive improvement. Although some areas require further development, these shortfalls do not detract from the overall good quality of care children receive.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children live in an emotionally warm and welcoming environment where they feel comfortable and valued. Children are actively involved in choosing how shared spaces and their bedrooms look. This helps children to reflect their personalities and create a sense of ownership.

Children benefit from regular and purposeful discussions with staff. This helps them to make progress in key areas of their lives. Targets are agreed between staff, children and social workers and contribute to the child's care plan. One child described how staff are helping them to build the skills and confidence they need to move on to semi-independent living.

Due to the type of service provided at this home, children often arrive with very little notice due to the urgent nature of their circumstances. Despite this, staff respond quickly and sensitively to ensure that children feel welcome and reassured from the moment they arrive. This is because staff are skilled at building trusting relationships with children at pace. One child said that staff, 'Are lovely and make them feel at ease straight away.' This demonstrates the positive impact of the team's nurturing and attuned approach.

Children enjoy positive experiences that reflect their individual interests. One child spoke excitedly about attending a premier league football match. This trip was planned specifically around the child's love of football. Staff are committed to providing personalised opportunities for each child, ensuring that they feel seen and understood.

Children receive consistent, trauma-informed responses from staff. Staff have regular access to a psychologist, who provides guidance following serious incidents. Regular reflective discussion strengthens staff practice and contributes positively to children's emotional wellbeing. This helps children to feel understood and supported during periods of distress.

Children's views are heard and acted on. Their feedback is captured in weekly team meetings, ensuring that staff remain responsive to what matters to them. The home's development plan is informed by the children's voices, meaning children's opinions are valued and influence the care they receive.

Two children are in full-time education, with staff supporting consistent routines in attendance. One child is currently not accessing education. Staff are actively advocating with the child's placing authority and education professionals to secure an appropriate return to learning. Staff maintain a clear focus on education as a priority for all children.

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

The safeguarding arrangements in the home are clear and understood by staff. When allegations are made, the response is strong. The registered manager takes every allegation seriously and takes appropriate action. Leaders and managers ensure that allegation outcomes and findings are used as opportunities to learn and reflect, which strengthens safeguarding practice over time.

There is a low level of complaints. This reflects children's general positive experience in the home. When complaints are made, they are taken seriously and investigated fully with clear oversight from managers. Children are given feedback about the outcomes of their complaint, which helps them feel listened to and respected.

Some children in the home are vulnerable to exploitation. Incidents around this are managed well. Staff respond promptly and proportionately to ensure that children's safety is always prioritised. There is a strong level of managerial oversight, with leaders reviewing incidents closely to understand what happened and whether practice was effective. Concerns are shared with external agencies where appropriate. Follow-up actions include reflective discussions with staff and children.

Staff make effective use of external agencies, including substance misuse services and police, to provide targeted support for children and reduce risks. Staff have built good links with the local police community support officer, who carries out targeted work with children and builds positive relationships.

There have been times when children have gone missing from the home. When this happens, staff respond appropriately and consistently. Staff know what to do and follow agreed procedures consistently. Follow-up discussions with staff take place when children return and these are tailored to the specific circumstances of each incident. However, staff do not always ensure that children have return home interviews by the placing authority. This presents as missed learning opportunities to gain independent insight regarding children's experiences, triggers or risks.

There have been a small number of incidents where children have left the home and staff have not been immediately aware. When staff do become aware, they respond promptly and appropriately. Some steps have been taken by leaders and managers to

learn from these incidents, and have implement procedural changes and additional staff training. However, these actions have not yet led to sustained improvement, as further incidents have occurred.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by a new registered manager who has been in the role since December 2025. The registered manager brings a wealth of experience and is already strengthening the leadership oversight and daily practice. The registered manager is well supported by the senior leadership team, enabling her to embed her approach and maintain clear expectations to staff.

Staff say that the change in management has been positive and this has brought stability. The registered manager has identified areas that need to be improved and has a clear vision for the home. She has started to make some progress in a short amount of time.

Staff say that they feel well supported in their roles and there are regular opportunities to reflect on practice. One staff member said, 'The managers provide clear guidance and encourage opportunities to learn and develop, demonstrating a strong commitment to professional growth.'

There is a strong sense of teamwork. Staff work collaboratively and support each other during challenging situations and incidents. Staff say that team meetings and supervisions are prioritised. This ensures that staff receive regular guidance, reflection and clear expectations of their role.

Staff have access to a programme of mandatory training. However, only a small number of staff have completed training in contextual safeguarding and child exploitation. This is despite these areas being relevant to the risks faced by children living in the home. This limits the ability of staff to fully understand and respond to the wider risks that may affect children.

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 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 the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(b)) In particular, ensure that all staff are aware of the whereabouts of each child, to ensure their safety.	8 July 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children have an opportunity to have an independent return home interview when they have been missing from the home. This is to include appropriate challenge to the local authority should these interviews not take place. The information gathered from these interviews should be used when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards' page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should ensure that staff receive and understand training that is relevant to children's presenting needs and risks. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards' page 43, paragraph 9.10)

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: SC399222

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: West Sussex County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 1RG

Responsible individual: Hayley Grover

Registered manager: Kerry Sawyer

Inspector

Ben Wilson, Social Care Inspector

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