

# 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.

The home reopened in April 2023 following a period of being non-operational. One child has lived in the home since then.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 26 August 2022 and is suitably qualified.

### Inspection dates: 18 and 19 September 2023

|                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b> | <b>good</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                                             |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | good |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|

|                                           |      |
|-------------------------------------------|------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | good |
|-------------------------------------------|------|

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

**Date of last inspection:** 24 August 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 24/08/2017      | Full            | Good                    |
| 09/03/2017      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 23/11/2016      | Full            | Good                    |
| 01/03/2016      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness  |

## **Inspection judgements**

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

The care offered at this home for children is based on short-term emergency stays. Therefore, children's education and health needs are prioritised and arranged around this. For example, one child's education placement ended during their time at the home, interim arrangements were suitable to fill the gap while a permanent education plan was made. Such as, home tutoring so that learning opportunities were not missed.

The registered manager has ensured that there is thorough care planning in place to support the child to make progress and have positive experiences during their stay. This ensures that the child can make progress towards their goals and build on relationships with staff.

Risk plans are in place and guide staff on support strategies to reduce risks while balancing appropriate boundaries. These boundaries are naturally tested, and the staff reflect with the child to understand natural consequences as part of their development and maturity.

There is a focus on developing the child's skills to increase their independence, for example using public transport and spending time with friends. The staff are proactive in providing support and education in these areas so that the child can use these skills when they move on.

The home is spacious and tidy. However, it has not been personalised to provide a place of nurture and warmth. For example, doors are numbered or have magnet card locks on the wall to be opened. Some staff also wear identity badges around the home, including carrying key cards. This does not present a sense of homeliness for children.

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

The staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and can demonstrate this in their practice to promote children's safety. The registered manager has discussed safeguarding practice with one child, including the importance of honesty and the impact that not being truthful may have. This has led to this child understanding the importance of safeguarding matters and their relationship with staff.

The staff have meaningful discussions to explore relevant topics that are a part of the child's care planning approach and support their progress. For example, where there are concerns about fire safety, the staff team has asked the local fire brigade to meet with the child and discuss fire safety. This work has then been continued by the staff to reduce the risks.

Staff manage behaviour incidents well and respond quickly to support the child. The registered manager ensures that she has oversight of all incidents, and that care plans are updated to guide staff to help reduce the impact of further incidents.

The staff listen to and encourage the child to express their views and opinions about their care. This includes when a child may wish to make a complaint. Staff ensure that the child is kept updated throughout this process and provided with an outcome.

There are suitable checks in place to ensure that internal staff have been safely recruited. However, there are some gaps in ensuring that the same scrutiny has been applied to agency staff, such as checking their employment history and verification for leaving any previous employment when they have worked with children or vulnerable adults.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The registered manager and staff team are dedicated and committed to the vision for the home and the goals they wish to achieve to support children during their short stay at the home. This includes ensuring that children can reflect on their time at the home as a positive experience in their care journey.

The staff feel supported by the leadership team and each other and enjoy working in the home. Equally, the registered manager feels supported by her senior leadership team and can delegate tasks effectively to other managers and team leaders with confidence in their abilities to ensure consistent leadership while maintaining her oversight.

The registered manager and management team ensure that all staff have an opportunity to have meaningful and supportive supervision and additional support following incidents or times of difficulty. This supports their development and provides reflection. This is also extended to agency staff to ensure that they receive the same support and feel part of the team.

There has been an ongoing recruitment drive, and this has been effective, with a full team in the pipeline. Regular agency staff are working in the home and there are plans to reduce their deployment as new staff join following their recruitment checks being finalised.

There is a focus on enhancing staff's knowledge, skills and experience to improve practice. For example, expert practitioners, such as the local authority designated officer, are invited to staff team meetings to provide training and discussion for staff in keeping children safe. All staff have completed mandatory and additional training, as well as attending a thorough induction and being supported through a well-planned probation period.

## 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         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| <p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably.</p> <p>(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(vii))</p> <p>The registered provider should ensure that the presentation of the home and staff practice provide a caring and nurturing environment for children balanced with the health and safety needs of the children.</p> | 29 December 2023 |
| <p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children's home; or</p> <p>if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home,</p> <p>if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 30 November 2023 |

full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.

(Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d))

The registered provider should ensure that they can evidence that suitable vetting has been carried out on agency staff working in the home and they are satisfied this meets the requirements.

## 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, West Street, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 1RG

**Responsible individual:** Julian Skeates

**Registered manager:** Emma Gibbons

## Inspector

Sara Stoker, Social Care Inspector

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