

SC438764

Registered provider: Potton Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides long-term care for up to six children who have experienced neglect and/or emotional abuse.

The suitably qualified and experienced manager registered with Ofsted in October 2021.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 January 2023

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: 12 October 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/10/2021	Full	Good
14/02/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness
08/10/2019	Full	Good
03/01/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of this inspection, four children were living at the home.

Considerable recent investment in the building has improved the standard of accommodation significantly. The children have space to relax, alone or in company, in a well-decorated and comfortable home which they are proud of.

The manager has carefully matched the children with each other and the staff's skills and experience. As a result, children are settled and have developed positive friendships with each other and in the local community. These constructive relationships sometimes continue after the children move on. One young person who previously lived at the home returned to spend time with the staff and children over the Christmas period.

Children access regular therapy with the company therapist. The staff team is experienced and knows the children well. Staff take time to get to know the children, their personalities and interests. As a result, staff are attuned to the children's fluctuating emotional well-being and provide the highly personalised support that children need. Staff made Christmas a joyous occasion for the children, while being very sensitive about difficult feelings that children may experience. Staff decorated one lounge with non-Christmas-themed balloon decorations. Children described how they and the staff had great fun together with balloon games.

Because of the guidance and support from staff, children are making progress in all aspects of their lives. This has helped them develop their confidence and resilience as well as have future career aspirations.

The staff work hard with partner agencies to engage children in education. Staff have developed close partnerships with schools, and they are helping one child to complete vocational training in their career path of choice. One child described how, because of the positive support and encouragement of the staff, they had changed from somebody who hated school to enjoying getting up and going to school.

Staff provide lots of opportunities for the children to have fun and make some happy memories of their time living at the home. Children have enjoyed trips to the theatre, meals out, ice skating, shopping and cinema trips as well as a group holiday. On the day of the inspection, children had persuaded the manager to allow them to go to a local under-17's disco. The joyous enthusiasm as the girls planned their outfits and helped each other get ready was infectious. The whole event, including the rising noise and excitement, was managed with sensitive good humour by the staff.

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

Children describe the staff as 'supportive' and 'caring'. One child said, '[The staff] are all lovely.' The positive relationships that staff build with the children help children to feel safe and settled. Children identify the staff as trusted and safe adults. They feel confident to talk openly to staff about the issues which matter to them, knowing that the non-judgemental staff will help them navigate life's challenges.

Because of the careful matching and positive behaviour management approach by staff, significant incidents are rare. Staff recognise and celebrate positive behaviour. There has been only one incident of physical restraint in the past year. Consequences for any negative behaviour are fair. However, on occasion, behaviour management records are not sufficiently clear. Two incident records lacked clarity regarding who completed post-restraint debriefs and on how a financial sanction is to be repaid.

Staff have a good understanding of risks to children and what may trigger incidents. The manager and staff understand the risks in the local area.

The manager has developed close working relationships with partner safeguarding professionals such as the police. These relationships have been a strong protective factor for the children. The police community officer visits the home and builds positive relationships with the children. This supports the staff with the work they do with children to keep them safe. As a result of these partnerships, children are safer and more aware of risky situations.

During the inspection, a bottle of white spirit was found left in a room being decorated. The manager had been unaware of this and removed it. This was not accessible to children but, as a flammable substance, it posed a fire risk.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is suitably experienced and qualified. She has worked at the home as registered manager on two separate occasions over the past few years. The manager has built established positive working relationships with partner professionals, who hold her and the staff team in high regard.

The manager models high expectations of therapeutic parenting to the staff and is highly present. The children enjoy spending time with staff, as the staff understand what matters most to the children. The manager has advocated effectively for the children and raises concerns appropriately when other agencies do not fulfil their responsibilities.

The manager and deputy manager work closely as a team. They ensure that they and the staff maintain effective communication and teamwork. The staff feel valued, challenged and respected by the supportive managers.

New staff benefit from good-quality induction and flexible training which meets their personal development needs. All new staff undertake a minimum of three weeks shadow shifts, and more shadow shifts occur if needed. The staff training programme is monitored to ensure that all staff access core training in preventing radicalisation, first aid, therapeutic approaches and safeguarding. Staff also access additional relevant training in areas such as responding to self-harm, exploitation and county lines. Most staff hold a suitable level 3 qualification in working with children in residential care.

The manager has a good understanding of the home, its strengths and areas for development. This knowledge successfully drives improvement. Staff feel well supported. Although there are some vacancies, most of the staff have worked at the home for over a year, and many for several years. The support for staff has ensured consistency in the team, which has provided stability and security for the children.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home stores all flammable substances safely. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that records are consistently clearly maintained and that information is always recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: SC438764

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Potton Homes Limited

Registered provider address: 3 Rayns Way, Syston, Leicester LE7 1PF

Responsible individual: David Whitty

Registered manager: Michelle Kerrison

Inspector

Joanna Heller, Social Care Inspector

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