

# 1252937

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

Staff at this home look after up to four children whose needs include difficult behaviours and learning difficulties, and who may be at risk of self-harm, substance misuse and exploitation.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 29 November 2019.

### Inspection dates: 3 to 4 March 2020

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>good</b>
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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:** 17 May 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:**

None.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/05/2018	Full	Good
23/02/2018	Interim	Not judged
24/05/2017	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

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

The improvements that children have made since the new manager came into post in 2019 are both positive and significant. There is a real family atmosphere at this home, which is assisting children to thrive. One parent said: 'I cannot recognise this as the same child... the staff are amazing.'

Relationships between adults and children support children to settle quickly and to feel able to talk about the things that matter to them. The children all said how much they like and value the adults who care for them. One said that the adults 'are the best thing about the home because they care about you'.

Staff assess and evaluate any potential negative impact on the group when new children move into the home. The positive impact a child may have after moving in is discussed, but not recorded. This is a missed opportunity to evidence the thought that managers put into placement decisions. In addition, a child's online activities are not recorded in an impact assessment. This runs the risk that staff may not have up-to-date knowledge of any concerns associated with the online activities a new child is involved with.

Adults listen to and respect the children. They help them to participate in important decisions relating to their care. For example, adults helped a child to evaluate schools in the area so that she could make an informed choice about which school she should attend. Children confidently make complaints about the things they do not like.

Good links with the children's schools help teachers to understand the children's needs and also help maintain children's educational placements. If a child is not in an education placement, adults take steps to ensure that this is for as short a time as possible. Managers also check the staff's knowledge of the education system. If managers find gaps in the staff's knowledge, they put in support and additional training. This helps staff to contribute effectively to the children's education plans and review meetings.

Activities promote the children's interests and friendships very well. Adults encourage children to develop personal interests and join outside clubs. Adults thoughtfully arrange opportunities that children might have missed otherwise. These opportunities range from a surprise trip to Paris to building a car out of a cardboard box on a rainy day.

The registered manager has introduced comprehensive records which outline how well children are able to acquire and use age-appropriate self-help and independence skills. This has increased adults' understanding of what children are able to do and what help they need to develop the skills to become more independent.

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

Safeguarding agencies spoke positively about how leaders and managers work with them if a safeguarding concern arises. Leaders and managers also act immediately if there are any concerns about adults' practice. Adults understand how to respond to safeguarding concerns and how to maintain a strong safeguarding culture. This is effective in promoting the safety and welfare of the children living in the home.

The home's risk assessments are excellent, and are completed, reviewed and changed when necessary. These assessments provide thoughtful guidance which helps adults to identify risks and manage these appropriately.

A clear reward system encourages children to understand, and to do, what is expected of them. Adults let children know when they are doing well and help them to improve when they are not. Community meetings to discuss problematic issues between children can be called by anybody at the home. Children said that these meetings usually help to sort out any issues that have occurred. The children said that they found it helpful that the meetings focus on how people felt rather than the incident itself.

The registered manager is supporting adults to use de-escalation techniques and restorative practice more effectively. This has significantly reduced the number of physical interventions taking place. This has also reduced the number of times children go missing. A child talked about how the staff knew when she was 'going to explode'. She described how this helped her to recognise when she was getting angry and to manage this better. She also said that previously she had been restrained a lot, but this had not occurred for some time. Records show she has been restrained twice this year; both restraints occurred more than six months prior to the inspection.

Two staff did not follow appropriate guidelines when talking with a child about an incident that the police were investigating. This had no adverse impact, but ran the risk of undermining the police investigation. This lapse in staff procedural practice was not noted or challenged by managers.

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

The registered manager has skilfully guided the adults who work here. She has improved practice in relation to providing children with personalised care. This supports children to feel secure and make progress. There are many examples of managers thinking with staff about what works best for each child. This has led to a stronger and more consistent approach to the children's care.

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the home's strengths and challenges. They plan effectively to address any identified shortfalls. For example, managers identified that adults struggled to complete their relevant qualifications in the appropriate timescales. Effective measures have been implemented to improve

this, and managers are making regular checks to ensure that the timescales are met.

A better system of long-term planning for how sessional staff can fill shifts was implemented in January 2020. This change has resulted in managers being able to plan shifts more easily, and provides sessional workers with greater clarity and control of their work plans.

The sufficiency of staffing has also improved lately. During the inspection, the numbers of staff and their deployment met the children's needs well. Children also said that there are always adults available to support them. Adults confirmed that changes to their working patterns had been beneficial; the changes had reduced the length of time of some shifts and this in turn, improved continuity of care for children.

Manager's monitoring systems are generally well organised, but are not totally effective. Most records that the inspector viewed were well written. For instance, health and safety records are well documented and any premises issues are quickly addressed. However, the home's monitoring processes did not identify the shortfalls in practice that occurred during the previously mentioned safeguarding incident. The manager's six-monthly review of the quality of care for children has insufficient evaluation and analysis. This undermines the effectiveness of the care review process in bringing about improvement.

Staff challenge and support professionals well. One social worker said that adults work well with her. If issues do occur, these are quickly resolved. Records show that if the managers are not satisfied with decisions made about a child, they make their views known and escalate concerns if necessary.

# 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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1)(2)(h))	08/04/2020

## Recommendations

- Children must be listened to and enabled to report any allegations at the earliest opportunity. Staff should report any allegation of abuse immediately to a senior manager within the home. Any allegation of harm or abuse must be addressed in line with the home's child protection policy. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.17)

In particular, the registered person should review whether all staff have an appropriate understanding of the type of questions which they can ask a child when a police investigation is in progress.

- The registered person is responsible for deciding what each review should focus on, based on the specific circumstances of the home at that particular time and any areas of high risk to the children that the home is designed to care for, such as missing or exploitation. They will also consider what information or data recorded in the home will form part of the evidence base for their analysis and conclusions. There is no expectation that the registered person will review the home against every part of the Quality Standards every six months – registered persons should use their professional judgement to decide which factors to focus on. The review should enable the registered person to identify areas of strength and possible weakness in the home's care, which will be captured in the written report. The report should clearly identify any actions required for the next 6 months of delivery within the home and how those actions will be addressed. The whole review process and the resulting report should be used as a tool for continuous improvement in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.4)

## **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:** 1252937

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Compass Children's Homes Limited

**Registered provider address:** Mountfields House, Epinal Way, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3GE

**Responsible individual:** Benjamin Jordan

**Registered manager:** Angela Sayers

## Inspector

Ruth Coler, Social Care Inspector



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