

2528516

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes 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 six girls who have been subject to or are at risk of child exploitation. The home provides a compulsory therapeutic programme.

The registered manager left in January 2021. There is an acting manager in post who is not yet registered.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 7 September 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on our website.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 April 2021

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: 5 November 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/11/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

One child moved out of the home to foster care. This child's mental health has improved greatly from her starting point at the home. The in-house psychologist continues to provide therapy to this child. This demonstrates the dedication of the staff team to continue to work in the best interests of the children. The child said, 'The staff are so caring and supportive. They gave me all the help that I needed.'

One child was dissatisfied that the support from local child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) was not meeting her immediate health needs. In the absence of this support, managers have arranged for additional therapeutic care to be provided until the appropriate CAMHS support is obtained. The staff understand the importance of meeting the mental health needs of the children to promote their well-being.

The staff recognise the children's achievements and use recognition strategies to good effect. This helps the children to develop their self-esteem.

The staff know the children well. The staff have developed positive relationships with the children. There is warmth in the exchanges between the staff and the children. This gives the children a sense of belonging, which is beneficial to their emotional development.

The children say that bullying is not an issue at the home. One child said that the staff have taught her effective coping strategies to use when there is conflict or unsettlement. The child was able to recognise her own personal growth since moving to the home. The improvements that she cited include being more able to convey thoughts and feelings, improved decision-making when in crisis, and the capacity to accept compliments and displays of appropriate affection. Given the child's starting point at the home, these improvements are impressive.

Two children attend education. One child is not currently in formal education. This has been agreed by the child's social worker. Staff have promoted the child's education at the home. This has led to the child achieving a formally recognised qualification. The staff support all the children to work towards and achieve qualifications that are in addition to their formal education. This gives children a sense of accomplishment and broadens their understanding.

Since December 2020, the home has, at times, been unsettled. The staff were unable to meet the needs of one child and her placement was ended. The managers have worked closely with the child's placing authority to ensure that she had a suitable home to move on to. The managers acknowledge that the period of unsettlement has affected the other children's positive experiences of living at the home. Consequently, the managers have not accepted any other children into the home during this period.

Staff have not always ensured positive disengagement for children. Three staff members have left the home with little or no notice to the children. This does not promote positive relationships. Neither does this give the children enough time to emotionally prepare, so that their experiences of staff moving on are positive. A social worker said that her child was unsettled when the previous manager left at short notice.

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

One child is exceptionally vulnerable to harm. Managers have worked collaboratively with medical staff, the police and social workers to create a plan to increase the safety of the child. Incident records illustrate that staff have followed risk assessments appropriately. However, due to the complex and evolving nature of some of the children's behaviours, responses have not been consistently sufficient to reduce risk.

The staff understand trauma and the behaviours that are associated with traumatic experiences. The children are supported to make sense of their previous experiences and to reduce negative coping strategies. The embedded therapeutic programme recognises that children's therapeutic journeys differ. Consequently, the support provided is highly individualised. The staff are not risk averse. They look beyond incidents to understand what the children's behaviours are communicating to them.

In recent months, there has been an escalation in the use of restraint. Restraint, when used, is reasonable, proportionate and has been necessary to reduce harm.

Children know how to complain and have complained about their experiences in the home. These complaints have been responded to appropriately by staff.

Children infrequently go missing from the home. On such occasions, the staff are vigilant and follow missing person procedures effectively. The staff challenge local authority representatives when return home interviews are not held.

Risks are reviewed effectively, and helpful strategies to reduce risk are in place. These are widely understood by the staff. However, in recent months, these strategies have not consistently been effective. Some children have required medical support in hospital due to self-harming behaviours, and one child has been at risk of harm from access to a very busy road.

The manager recognised that one child's complex needs could not be met at the home and, consequently, the child moved to a more suitable placement.

A requirement identified at the last inspection has not been met. On one occasion, the staff did not report a practice issue promptly. This reduces the safeguards in place to protect children and keep them safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager left the home in January 2021. The registered manager worked alongside the interim manager for several weeks prior to leaving the home. This enabled a sufficient handover of the management arrangements. The interim manager is yet to be registered.

During the unsettled period at the home, the manager worked additional hours to cover shifts. At times, this led to less time to focus on managerial tasks. The responsible individual has supported the manager during this time. Additionally, the manager has been supported by other managers from the wider organisation.

The staff speak highly of the manager and appreciate the support that she gave to the staff team when extra staffing was required. Since the last assurance visit in September 2020, eight staff have joined the home and five staff have left. During a period when a child required three-to-one staffing, this placed an added pressure on the staff team. The staff said that they felt tired and, at times, burnt out from having to work extra hours. However, the staff said that they wished to support one another and the children and therefore agreed to work additional hours in the best interests of the children. The staff are committed and dedicated to the children. The manager has set a clear example of going above and beyond expectations to support the children, and the staff have followed this lead.

Managers work proactively and effectively with external agencies. The managers provide tenacious challenge when they consider that partnership agencies are not working in the children's best interest.

Monitoring, internally and externally, is good. The quality of monitoring drives improvement at the home.

Notifications to Ofsted have been sent promptly. This enables Ofsted to have an in-depth overview of incidents and serious events and how they have been managed.

Supervision is held regularly. However, managers failed to address a concern in supervision that related to staff not reporting a practice issue promptly. This has led to a recommendation from the last inspection being repeated.

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
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust. (Regulation 11 (1)(a))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that staff understand their impact on children's lives and the preparation that children need, so that children's experiences of staff moving on are positive.</p>	7 May 2021
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vii))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that all staff understand their responsibilities to report practice concerns promptly and that they follow the home's safeguarding policies.</p>	7 May 2021

Recommendation

- The registered person should have systems in place so that all staff receive supervision that enables them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children in their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

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: 2528516

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes Limited

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

Responsible individual: Sonata Brisley

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Lianne Bradford, Social Care Inspector

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