

# SC032058

Registered provider: Buckinghamshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a local authority and provides residential care for up to six children who have social, emotional and/or mental health difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 26 January 2021.

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 14 August 2019 to carry out a full inspection. The report is published on Ofsted's website.

In line with the authority's wider plans about its children's homes provisions, the home stopped accommodating children in April 2020. The provider planned to complete a full refurbishment of the property. Consequently, the provider accepted a condition on its registration and, in accordance with this, has given Ofsted two months' notice of its intention to become operational once again.

### Inspection dates: 27 to 28 April 2021

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** **good**

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:** 14 August 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
14/08/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/11/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
04/04/2018	Full	Good
13/12/2017	Full	Inadequate

## Inspection judgements

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

Due to the registration condition on the home, no children are currently living here. Therefore, the inspectors focused on tracking the experiences of how well the children who lived here after the last inspection were supported to move on. The inspectors also looked at the quality of the refurbishment, staff recruitment and training and the requirements made from the previous inspection, to judge the provider's readiness to provide children with high-quality care and positive experiences.

Good-quality children's plans and records show the progress the children have made since living in the home. The previous manager reviewed these documents regularly and ensured that information was correct and updated in a timely way. As a result, clear and relevant information was used to reliably plan for the children's moves.

Strong consultation included the children's wishes and feelings. Consequently, each child had an appropriate amount of control and understanding about their life-journey. The staff shared the children's plans with each child's new caregivers. Gradual and sensitively planned introductions included visits, overnight stays and routine information-sharing. In one example, a child returned home to their parents and another child moved to a specialist residential service.

The home has been decorated to a high standard, creating a modern and light interior complete with soft furnishings. It feels welcoming, and ready for children to move in.

During the home's refurbishment, the staff team was redeployed to other children's homes operated by this local authority. Most of the staff have now returned to the home and have started their working patterns. This includes the newly registered manager, who was once the home's responsible individual.

Redeployed staff and new recruits have taken the opportunity to be trained in mentalisation-based treatment training led by the home's in-house clinical psychologist. This is to ensure that the staff can fully meet the home's statement of purpose and the children's needs. Staff have continued to receive regular and reflective supervision from their line managers throughout their redeployment and on their return to this home. This has helped with continuity, staff progress and development.

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

The staff are risk-aware but not risk-averse. Risk assessments provide an appropriate balance between safety strategies and allowing the children to maximise their life experiences by taking acceptable risks. This increases opportunities for the children to enjoy new experiences and to develop resilience while ensuring that they are kept safe from harm.

The previous manager wrote comprehensive risk assessments and safety management plans for the children who lived in the home previously. The staff strategies to support the children in managing these risks were clear and reviewed robustly following any incident. The staff explore the children's complex behaviours with a multi-agency approach, and use informed resources to help further their knowledge and understanding following these events. For example, staff have attended additional exploitation workshops.

Staff training focuses on keeping the children safe in the context of relevant risks. The completion of mandatory safeguarding training, in line with the local authority's safeguarding procedures, helps with a consistent staff approach. Staff are able to confidently explain the process of how they must deal with allegations made by children. As a result, children are likely to have their concerns addressed in an appropriate way.

The registered manager has designed a detailed location risk assessment, written in conjunction with specialist agencies. Risks are clearly identified, and the registered manager has considered other potential areas of risk, such as contacting a local primary school to build in links. The staff's own knowledge about local issues has helpfully informed risk management plans. Consequently, the staff team is well prepared in the event of children moving in.

Safer recruitment practice is sound. New employees do not join the staff team until all of the required pre-employment checks have been fully completed.

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

Leaders have successfully addressed all of the requirements made from the last inspection. The improvements identified from this inspection have impacted positively on the experiences for children, and the registered manager is clear on how this work will continue as children move into the home. The staff team has undertaken high levels of training since the last inspection. The current focus of the registered manager is to now integrate and embed this learning into care practice.

The registered manager and responsible individual have a shared vision for the home. They are focused on providing a secure and stable base for children to enable them to progress and achieve. They work in close partnership with a range of professionals and specialist services to safeguard the children and to meet their holistic and therapeutic needs. This approach demonstrates the leaders' and managers' dedication to wanting the absolute best care and outcomes for children.

The members of the newly formed team are highly motivated, work well together and report good team morale. The staff recognise their strengths and weaknesses as individuals and plan to use this knowledge to support each other and perform as an effective team. The staff are excited about working with children again and they are looking forward to the challenges that lay ahead.

The home's workforce development plan focuses on individual staff's strengths, training and development needs. The plan's emphasis on professional development

demonstrates the importance that the registered manager places on continued learning. However, the plan lacks details on staff supervision, induction, probation, and procedures for managing and improving staff performance. This plan is under review across the local authority's children's homes and shortfalls are planned to be revised soon.

There was a delay in staff informing the previous manager of a child's complaint. Once the manager was made aware, she acted quickly and proportionately by implementing a safety plan and consulting with relevant professionals before concluding the complaint with the child. The staff spoken to by the inspectors on the day of the inspection were clear in how they would support a child to make a complaint. Although the child was not put at risk on this occasion, the delay could have presented unnecessary risks for the child and the staff involved.

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

### **Recommendations**

- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should:
  - detail the necessary management and staffing structure (including any staff commissioned to provide health and education), the experience and qualifications of staff currently working within the staffing structure and any further training required for those staff, to enable the delivery of the home's Statement of Purpose;
  - detail the processes and agreed timescales for staff to achieve induction, probation and any core training (such as safeguarding, health and safety and mandatory qualifications);
  - detail the process for managing and improving poor performance; detail the process and timescales for supervision of practice (see regulation 33 (4) (b)) and keep appropriate records for staff in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person and the staff should encourage children to share any concerns about their care or other matters as soon as they arise. Children must be able to take up issues or make a complaint with support and without any fear that this will result in any adverse consequences. Regulation 39 sets out the requirements on the registered person to have a complaints procedure. Children must be aware of this procedure and be reminded of it as necessary. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.13)

### **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:** SC032058

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

**Registered provider:** Buckinghamshire County Council

**Registered provider address:** Buckinghamshire County Council, County Hall,  
Walton Street Offices, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP20 1UA

**Responsible individual:** Noel Beaumont

**Registered manager:** Antony Metcalfe

### Inspectors:

Kelly Monniot, Social Care Inspector

Matt Nicholls, Social Care Inspector

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