

# SC431806

Registered provider: SWAAY Child and Adolescent Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is owned and operated by a private organisation that specialises in the assessment and treatment of adolescent males who have histories of trauma and associated specialist needs. The service offers an integrated education and therapeutic programme, coupled with a safe, supportive and nurturing home environment.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 20 July 2016.

The home is registered for four children with single sex occupancy.

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

### Inspection dates: 8 to 9 June 2021

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>outstanding</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children who need help, protection and care.

**Date of last inspection:** 3 December 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** None



## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/12/2019	Full	Outstanding
21/11/2018	Full	Outstanding
24/08/2016	Full	Outstanding
14/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

## Inspection judgements

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

Staff warmly welcome children from the moment they move in, so that they feel valued and respected from the very start. Children make excellent progress such as rebuilding fractured relationships with family members, no longer going missing, being able to take part in group activities and celebrating their cultural identity. One child has left the home since the last inspection, successfully moving on to supported living accommodation.

Staff, parents and other professionals all speak positively about the children's experience and progress in the home. For example,

- A professional said, '[name of child] has opened up in communicating his feelings where previously he would not even speak one-word answers.'
- A parent said, 'He has regular smiles on his face, and he has only been talking positively about the home for months.'
- A staff member said, 'I have only positive things to say about our home and our staff team. They have always gone above and beyond with the boys, and we have had brilliant holidays with them.'

Children live in a warm, pleasant home that is well maintained. They enjoy personalising their bedrooms and appreciate that staff listen to their wishes, such as their desire to have a pet. Children proudly show off their pets such as their hamster and lizard. They demonstrate an interest in learning about animals and how best to care for them.

Staff listen to children and advocate for them. For example, staff were able to voice a child's wishes for where he wants to live in the future. Consequently, relevant professionals reviewed this child's pathway plan.

Staff keep the needs of the children at the centre of their practice. For example, they produce a personalised children's guide for each child coming to live in the home. They create life story books, so children have a clear historical account of their wonderful experiences in the home. A placing social worker said, 'This is not a residential unit, it is a family home.' A child described the other boys in the home as being like his brothers.

Care staff work with education professionals and therapists to carefully manage and help children to explore their emerging identity. They agree with the child about how to explain the current issues that they are struggling with, to the other children in the home. This results in an acceptance and understanding by all. The recent creation of an equality and diversity lead staff member enhances the opportunity for children to learn about other cultures and beliefs. Children live in an inclusive environment where there is no indication of bullying, harassment or discrimination.

Staff demonstrate a commitment to support children to see those individuals who are important to them. For example, staff drive considerable distances to ensure that children see their parents. Staff use their training in supervising such meetings to ensure that they are a positive experience for all. The results are outstanding. For example, some relationships that were previously fractured now take place unsupervised, something once thought impossible to achieve.

The children's commitment to learning is impressive, with all children attending school or college. The role of a senior college support worker enriches the children's experience in their education and maximises their chance of success. Staff work with education professionals to identify any struggles that children may be having and agree strategies to improve their learning. Staff work with placing social workers and education professionals to ensure a continuity of education as children reach college age, so that children can realise their dreams.

Staff support children's independence. They are not risk averse and allow children to take age-appropriate risks. Children appreciate the confidence that staff put in them and they respond in a mature way. For example, one child has obtained a part-time job. Another child is excited about the opportunity to learn how to drive.

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

Staff practice in following up incidents is exceptionally strong. They support children sensitively to reflect on their behaviour, helping them to identify the triggers. Staff remain aware of children's underlying emotional disturbance and discuss children's needs with the therapy and education teams regularly. Staff demonstrate creative practice. For example, they make individualised cards, based on the child's favourite characters, to help the children communicate their feelings to avoid further incidents. This approach is successful and repeat incidents are rare.

Staff demonstrate a thorough knowledge about e-safety. Key staff developed a 'how-to guide' to check each device and piece of electronic equipment used by the children. Senior leaders, keen to make sure that staff remain skilled, arranged for bespoke training on internet safety. Staff have developed excellent trusting relationships with the children, who regularly share their online activity, understanding that it is for their own well-being. Consequently, children can enjoy electronic devices, such as smartphones, while staying safe.

Staff have managed the restrictions because of COVID 19 exceptionally well. They used their creative skills to ensure that the children had a vast range of activities to do in the home, as well as purchasing new bicycles and arranging a holiday in England between lockdowns. Staff were meticulous in the planning of the holiday, allowing for every eventuality should government guidance change. They created a child-friendly comic to explain social distancing measures and made a 'COVID time capsule' for children to record the historical events due to the virus. A child made such progress during lockdown that he was able to gain his Duke of Edinburgh

award. A professional said, 'I have been super impressed how staff have responded to the pandemic. They have thought outside the box and made a stressful situation more bearable for all.'

Children live in a safe environment. Staff are meticulous in their observations of potential hazards in the home. They adopt the necessary control measures, such as replacing roller blind cords, when emerging risks are identified. A placing social worker said, 'Staff have done their utmost to make the home environment as safe as is feasibly possible. They have sought [name of child's] view about the safeguarding measures.'

Even though some children may exhibit high risk behaviour, staff do not have to resort to using physical restraint. Staff work with other professionals to agree a safety plan for when children are struggling to manage their painful emotions. Incidents of going missing from care are rare. On occasion, some children may damage their environment while trying to process their difficult thoughts. A highly effective maintenance team goes above and beyond the call of expectations, sometimes working out of hours, to ensure any necessary repairs are made quickly and the home is maintained to an excellent standard. Children are not unnecessarily criminalised if they damage the home. Staff work with other professionals to understand the underlying psychological reasons for their behaviour.

The registered manager adopts safer recruitment practice. She has developed a checklist for internal staff transfers to satisfy herself that all the necessary checks are complete.

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

The home is well led and managed by an experienced and knowledgeable registered manager who knows each child and staff member well. Senior leaders and managers are child focused and aspirational. They apply a whole-child, multi-disciplinary approach to the individualised care of each child. Children benefit from all staff in the home and the wider organisation who are committed to meet their needs and improve their life chances.

The registered manager is effective in monitoring the quality of care. She is a visible presence in the home and uses the monthly independent visitor's report to drive forward improvement. She ensures that the statutory six-monthly report on the quality of care is submitted to Ofsted. This would benefit from inclusion of the opinion of staff. The registered manager has clear plans to improve the service such as providing bespoke training to children about autistic spectrum disorder so that children can better understand each other's needs.

Senior leaders demonstrate an understanding of the impact on staff of caring for highly traumatised children. They ensure that all staff have regular clinical supervision as a group, in addition to accessing individual clinical supervision if required. Senior leaders have recently provided training on the impact on staff of working with children with intense and complex needs. They have provided

guidance for staff on how they can best care for themselves. This means that children's life chances are maximised as a competent staff team focuses on listening and responding to children's needs daily.

The leadership team emphasises the importance of clear placement plans. These plans are comprehensive and are exemplary. They contain specific details about children's individual needs with targets for development. It is worthy to note that children regularly access their care plan. They are confident to tell staff about any bits that they do not understand. The key worker takes the time to help children understand what has been written about their needs and how best to support them. This means that children engage willingly with the strategies and targets in their placement plan.

The registered manager ensures that transition teams are involved at the right time and she actively chases the plans for permanency. Key workers provide excellent detailed professional reports to statutory reviews. This means that other professionals have a clear understanding of the progress of children and their current needs to underpin important decisions about their future care. A placing social worker described the staff communication with her as 'fantastic.'

The staff team is exceptional. The role is not a job to the staff, but a vocation. On some occasions, staff have come to celebrate events in the home, when they are not scheduled to be on duty, to ensure that it is a positive experience for the child.

Staff achieve the necessary childcare qualification within the required timeframe. Leaders and managers are consistent in their application of their expectations for all staff to develop as professionals. The registered manager has developed a detailed workforce plan. This considers the experience that staff bring into the setting as well as identifying their development needs. Children benefit from a well-trained staff team to meet their individual needs.

Newly appointed staff are well supported through a thorough induction process, which prepares them for their role. A staff member described the induction process as 'amazing' and the staff team as 'wonderful and supportive.'

The management team has been successful in generating a culture that is one of excellence. Staff take ownership to meet all the quality standards. All staff strive for continual improvement, making considerable effort to produce detailed individual plans to meet each child's needs.

The family environment, practice of staff and joint working with others are all cemented together by an outstanding leadership team that ultimately results in positive outcomes for children. A staff member said, 'I am privileged to be working for such a great company, in such a great house, with such great young people and amazing staff and management to support me.'

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

### **Recommendations**

- The registered person should consider what information or data recorded in the home will form part of the evidence base for their analysis and conclusions. In particular, consider the opinions of staff in the regulation 45 report. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', paragraph 15.4, page 65)

### **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:** SC431806

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

**Registered provider:** SWAAY Child and Adolescent Services Limited

**Registered provider address:** 591 London Road, Sutton, Surrey SM3 9AG

**Responsible individual:** Gerard Berry

**Registered manager:** Sasha Austria-Stevens

## Inspector

Keith Riley, Social Care Inspector

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