

SC477724

Registered provider: Crystal Care Solutions Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately run children's home. It is registered to provide care for up to three children. The provider states in their statement of purpose that they provide care for 'children with EBD (social and emotional difficulties)'. The home specialises in providing services in relation to sexually harmful behaviours.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2020.

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.

Following the on-site inspection, Ofsted received information relating to concerns regarding the home. We therefore requested further documentation, which was reviewed off site on 14 July 2021.

Inspection dates: 7 to 8 July 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	requires improvement

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 13 May 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/05/2019	Full	Good
25/06/2018	Full	Good
16/08/2017	Full	Good
13/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are cared for by a staff team who knows the children well. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the children's individual needs. Staff are confident in talking about the progress children have made while living at the home. Staff are skilled at developing and sustaining positive relationships with children. One child told the inspector, 'There is nothing the staff can improve on. Everything is okay.'

Children live in a homely environment; photographs of children and their experiences living at the home are on display in the living room. Despite some improvements, including a new kitchen and some areas of redecoration, the house is showing signs of wear and tear. The manager shared with the inspector a planned schedule of works to ensure that the home environment continues to be improved.

Since the last inspection, the children have been required to isolate due to positive cases of COVID-19. Staff volunteered to move into the home during the isolation period to ensure that children were cared for by adults who knew them.

Children are supported to participate safely in activities they enjoy. One child is enjoying playing rugby for their school, and two of the children have recently joined football teams in the community. The home has a summer holiday planned for later in the month. Children have incentives in place to earn additional spending money for their holiday.

Children living in the home are making good progress from their individual starting points. Two children are in full-time education. One child was preparing to return to education after a long period of time out of formal education, which they told the inspector they were 'excited' about.

Children are supported to spend time with the people who are important to them. For one child, the number of staff they need to safely care for them has reduced, and there is a plan in place for them to return home to live with their family. This plan shows the progress they have made since coming to live in the home.

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

Children benefit from high levels of supervision to ensure that they can safely live together in the home. This high level of supervision is carried out sensitively and in line with individual risk management plans. Children spoken with during the inspection confirmed that they understand the reasons for the levels of supervision.

Following a recent safeguarding incident, the home shared information with appropriate agencies swiftly and reviewed the measures in place to minimise the risks identified. One social worker said 'It was handled very well. They [the staff] had strategies in place before we had the meeting. They had done everything.'

Individual risk management plans assess a range of risks associated with each child's behaviour. Risk assessments have been reviewed and updated with recent information. However, the risk management plan for one child has not been updated to reflect information relating to the outcome of a serious allegation.

The manager uses impact risk assessment to look at potential admissions to the home. Children move into the home in a planned and considered way. However, one child's impact risk assessment did not include information relating to their specific developmental needs. The manager has addressed this shortfall and is included in the child's individual plans.

Staff have received appropriate training. This includes training relating to the specific needs of the children living in the home. Staff receive regular support and guidance from a specialist service to ensure that they understand children's experiences and are able to effectively reduce children's risks. Positive behaviour is promoted in the home.

Two children spoke with the inspector during the visit, and they both said that they feel safe at the home. As a result, children have been able to disclose information relating to their past experiences as they feel safe and able to do so. The child's therapist said: 'He would not have been able to talk about these things if he wasn't safe and settled.' There have been no incidents of children going missing from the home.

For one child, the number of physical interventions has reduced during their time at the home. The other two children living in the home have not been restrained. However, the registered manager has not always ensured that, when he is involved in physical interventions, the restraint has been reviewed by someone who was not involved in the incident. The records of consequences are not always being reviewed in a timely manner or evaluated for their effectiveness, in order to understand the impact of any action taken on children's behaviour.

Children do not have access to all areas of their home. One internal door was routinely locked in the evening, restricting the movement of children in the home. A requirement has been made in relation to this.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager has been in post for one year and is currently undertaking the relevant qualification. He aspires for children to achieve positive outcomes living in the home and encourages children to contribute to their placement plans.

There are shortfalls in the manager's monitoring and oversight of the home. The manager has been made aware of concerns for a child by their placing authority and has failed to record this information. The manager did not challenge the placing authority effectively over their response to this information being shared with them. This means that there has been a delay for the child in having the opportunity to discuss their concerns with their social worker or somebody independent to the home.

The manager does not routinely ensure that records around concerns and complaints are consistently maintained. As a result, children do not always receive a formal outcome to their concerns.

The current staff team is stable, which helps children to develop positive relationships with the staff. The manager has demonstrated safe recruitment practice when new members of the team have been recruited. Since the last inspection, agency staff have been used. The manager made arrangements for a regular agency member of staff to support a child who required additional staffing. This ensured that children benefitted from consistency.

Staff receive regular supervision and told inspectors they feel supported in their role. Furthermore, staff receive ongoing support from a specialist service to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills required for their role. This service also helps them to reflect on their own feelings about the behaviour of the children they care for. Staff told inspectors that they have access to external support services should they feel they need this.

Team meetings take place regularly and are attended by the therapists who are working with the children. This demonstrates how the home works closely with other professionals to ensure that there is a consistent approach to meet the needs of children. There is evidence that any practice issues identified are discussed during team meetings to ensure that improvements are made.

The manager has informed relevant professionals, including the designated officer, regarding matters of concern within the home. Feedback received from one social worker was positive. They described the home as being the 'driving force' behind

securing an educational placement for one child and said, 'staff are eager to share information regarding the child living in the home.'

The manager has kept under review the home's statement of purpose, which identifies the aims and objectives of the home. However, the manager has not secured one placing authority's consent to use door sensors as a means of surveillance, as stated in the statement of purpose.

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, The 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>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (c))</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that they escalate concerns to a child's placing authority in a timely manner.</p>	19 August 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>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i))</p>	19 August 2021

<p>This refers specifically to ensuring that where children have additional needs these are considered fully in their risk assessments.</p>	
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that—</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1) (2)(f)(h))</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that there are effective monitoring systems in place and clear records of any concerns raised, and the action taken to address these concerns.</p>	<p>19 August 2021</p>
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>children can access all appropriate areas of the children’s home’s premises; and</p> <p>any limitation placed on a child’s privacy or access to any area of the home’s premises—</p> <p>is necessary and proportionate;</p> <p>is kept under review and, if necessary, revised. (Regulation 21 (b)(c)(ii)(iii))</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that children have access to all areas of their home.</p>	<p>19 August 2021</p>
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p>	<p>19 August 2021</p>

the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and

within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—

has spoken to the user about the measure; and

has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and

within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))

The registered person must ensure that all records of restraint are subject to scrutiny to ensure they are fair and proportionate and that all sanctions are evaluated for effectiveness.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that they gain consent to any monitoring or surveillance by the placing authority in writing at the time of placement. (Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards, page 16, paragraph 3.16)

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: SC477724

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Crystal Care Solutions Limited

Registered provider address: Bank House, Market Square, Congleton, Cheshire CW12 1ET

Responsible individual: James O'Leary

Registered manager: William Howatt

Inspector

Genevieve O'Reilly, Social Care Inspector

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