

1232658

Registered provider: Compass Childrens Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and run by a private organisation. The home is registered to provide care for up to five children who can no longer live at home.

The registered manager resigned in October 2020. A new manager has applied to register with Ofsted.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021. We last visited this setting on 15 March 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. An assurance visit was completed on 7 October 2020. The reports are published on the Ofsted website.

The inspector discussed effects from the pandemic with the provider and has taken these into account in their evaluation of the provider.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 December 2021

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **Good**

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

Date of last inspection: 19 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/02/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12/11/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
04/07/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
23/01/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children flourish in a warm, welcoming and homely environment. They enjoy positive relationships with staff, which are built on honesty, trust and respect. The progress of children is good across all areas of their development. Consequently, their life chances and opportunities are improved. An independent reviewing officer said, 'This is a home from home. Staff are not afraid to be affectionate. [Name of child] is making fantastic progress here.'

The children benefit from good care planning. The home's placement plans are detailed and provide a clear picture of the children's needs and how these are being supported by the staff team. Children are fully included in the reviewing of these plans.

Children love spending time with staff. This is because staff listen to them and are generally interested in what they have to say. Staff welcome their ideas and suggestions as to what the home can do differently, for example sampling treats and sweets from other countries and in choosing activities, such as going for ghost walks.

A key strength of the home is the proactive approach taken by staff to reduce children's anxieties. Staff work tirelessly to help children manage change better and to communicate their feelings. As a result, children are now attending the company's school. Children attended school throughout the COVID-19 restrictions. As a result, their educational attainment is much improved and they have aspirations for their future. One child said that they wanted to be an engineer. Another child is looking for a college to complete a qualification in animal care, and another child wants to follow her passion for photography.

Children are healthy and have a good understanding of the importance of staying well. Staff ensure that children attend all health appointments, have consistent routines, a balanced diet and engage in exercise. Children's emotional health is a priority at this home. Staff reassure children within a nurturing relationship. Staff work closely with therapists to ensure that their practice demonstrates a therapeutic approach. Therapists offer support to staff individually and as a group. Children are engaging with therapists and can reflect on the benefits of this.

Seeing family is vital for the children. Some of the children's local authority area is a good distance away from the home, but staff support this well. Consequently, children spend quality time with those people who are important to them.

An outstanding area of practice is how the home captures the child's journey throughout their time at the home. Children's memories have been professionally made into books. Life-story work is captured in photographs, which include

comments from staff about a specific topic or achievement. Children said that they loved these books and that they will be lovely to look back on when they are adults.

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

Children are very positive about the care that they receive and say that they feel safe living at this home. Children were able to identify numerous staff, company professionals and external professionals to talk to if they are worried or feel unsafe. One child confidently said, 'Anybody here would listen. I know that they would do everything to make things right.'

The acting manager has strong and effective safeguarding measures in place that promote children's safety and well-being. For example, historical concerns raised about performance during previous employment were robustly followed through with the local designated safeguarding team.

Records are kept showing the process that was followed from any safeguarding concern, complaint or allegation. These are detailed and of high quality. The acting manager completes an audit of all safeguarding concerns, and a safeguarding professional from the company oversees all incidents. This means that there is robust and clear evidence of all the actions taken, including the outcomes.

The staff have established excellent relationships with relevant safeguarding professionals including the police, local authority safeguarding team, and designated officer. Proactive partnership working is further enhancing children's safety in the home and the community. A social worker said, 'Safeguarding at this home is second to none. I am very confident that my child is safeguarded and protected.'

Staff receive a wealth of training in safety matters, especially in children's emotional and mental health. For example, they have completed training on childhood trauma and therapeutic practices. A team of therapists works closely with the children and staff to put this learning into practice. As a result, children said that they were very settled in the home, that their behaviour was improving and that they can explore past events in a safe environment. This was echoed by several social workers. One social worker said about a child, 'She has never spoken to anyone before. It is a testament to the staff that she is able to do this now.'

Comprehensive risk assessments give staff clear information about a child's needs and vulnerabilities. These are diligently followed, reviewed and kept up to date. Children contribute to these records and offer suggestions about how staff can help them. Therapists oversee the children's risk assessments to ensure that there is a therapeutic response from staff. Additionally, children have planned key-worker sessions to discuss aspects of their care and safety issues. As a result, there has only been one incident of a child being reported missing from the home since the assurance visit.

Children's behaviour is successfully managed by staff who know and understand the children well. Staff use effective behaviour management strategies that acknowledge and reward positive behaviour. Staff have a good insight into behaviour management and approach challenging situations in a calm and consistent way. As a result, the use of physical interventions has significantly reduced. Staff's innate understanding of the children means they are aware of subtle changes in the children's behaviour or presentation when children are feeling upset or anxious. They provide strategies, such as feeling cards, to enable children to quickly show how they are feeling, rather than give a full explanation. Therefore, staff can offer support quickly.

Children live in a physically safe environment where they are protected by strong health and safety procedures. The home is warm and decorated to a good standard. Children are proud of their home and their bedrooms reflect their uniqueness. Children and staff regularly practice how to leave the home safely, in the event of a fire. All visitors' identification and COVID-19 status are checked.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last full inspection, the home has undergone some changes in management and staffing. The registered manager resigned and several staff left throughout the COVID-19 restrictions. Therefore, there was an unsettled period in 2020. During this time, children living in the home moved into semi-independence or to suitable alternative placements. The responsible individual took positive action by limiting the home to three new children, until more staff could be recruited. Since March 2021, staffing has significantly improved. The acting manager has submitted their application for registration and a full staff team has been employed.

The children benefit from being cared for by a team that is effectively managed and well supported. Leaders and managers are experienced, strong and passionate about improving the lives of the children they care for. This was confirmed by the positive feedback from a range of professionals. A social worker said, 'The opportunities that they provide are amazing. I am very happy with this placement.' Another said, 'This is a very child-focused home and staff are very committed.'

The acting manager creates a supportive environment for staff where they can challenge and express their views. Staff receive regular and effective supervision and appraisals. However, some senior staff complete staff supervisions and they have not received any formal training by the company to do this. This does not ensure that all staff receive supervision from a suitably qualified and experienced person.

Most staff are experienced in childcare. Half of the staff team has the National Vocational Qualification Level 3. New staff have been entered onto a suitable recognised childcare qualification. At monthly team meetings, staff share examples of good practice, training and development information to aid their learning. As a result, staff say that they are supported, valued and motivated.

Research-informed practice has helped to develop a strong, confident staff team. This is making a good difference to the lives and experiences of children. The acting manager and staff have undertaken a wealth of training to support them in dealing with children who have suffered loss, trauma and rejection. For example, staff have completed positive behaviour support (PBS) and childhood trauma training. PBS is a value-led approach, which is based on the principle that you can teach someone a more effective and positive behaviour response rather than a challenging one. A member of staff said, 'The training underpins everything we do. It makes you look at this differently. We can look beneath the behaviour and find the reason.'

The acting manager has a good understanding of the strengths of the home. She makes effective use of both internal and external monitoring to make sure that good standards of care are maintained.

Staff work closely with teachers, social workers, health professionals and lead child protection agencies. Feedback from stakeholders is positive, praising staff's commitment, children's progress and the effective communication with the acting manager and the staff team.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person must ensure that staff are supervised by an appropriately qualified person. ('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: 1232658

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Compass Childrens Homes Limited

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

Responsible individual: Nicola Brown

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Pam Nuckley, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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