

1227869

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a large privately owned company with over 30 children's homes across England. The home is registered to provide care for up to five children aged between seven and 17. Children are likely to have experienced trauma which has led to emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The registered manager has been in post since the home opened in 2016.

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.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 February 2022

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: 4 December 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/12/2019	Full	Outstanding
12/09/2018	Full	Good
21/02/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
04/05/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home is spacious and is adorned with children's photos and their achievements. Children were proud to show the inspector their rooms, which have personalised art murals on the walls. Children have plenty of space and make the most of the different areas throughout the home for playing, doing homework and playing football. However, some parts of the home have become worn and require repair. This does not impact on children's safety but detracts from the otherwise homely environment.

Children have mostly been at the home for lengthy periods and have become very settled. However, one child was not well matched to the home. This child had emotional needs which the registered manager did not fully understand when the child moved in. The staff team did not have the skills to help the child when they became upset, and the child's risks increased. The child had to move on from the home in an unplanned way.

Staff develop and maintain strong and supportive relationships with children. One child told the inspector that the home is special to them because they feel as though staff have seen them grow up there. These relationships help children to make progress in important areas of their lives.

Staff encourage children to attend school and engage with their education. One child told the inspector how staff have supported them with their GCSE revision and taken them to visit colleges they would like to attend next year to look at suitable courses. The school professionals comment that children make progress because of the support they receive from the home.

Staff offer nurturing care to children in line with their specialist needs. However, when more support is needed from other professionals, the registered manager does not always challenge other agencies to make sure that children's health needs are met in a timely way. As a result, one child's health needs are unclear, which is preventing them from getting support which they will need when they live independently.

Children have a wide range of opportunities to share their views, wishes and feelings. For example, staff regularly meet with children and have key-work sessions. The manager has good oversight of children's views and ensures that they have a range of different resources to help them to express their views and participate in their care. External professionals comment positively on the care that children receive. One professional commented that the home feels like a 'family'. They said that when they visit the child, they are welcomed with 'open arms' by the staff team.

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

Children feel safe living in the home. This is because they feel cared for by staff who know and understand them. One child's social worker said that after having lots of placement moves, the child, for the first time, feels like she 'belongs'. A school professional for the same child said that they have noticed the child is much calmer in school since living at the home. Another child has stopped going missing from care since living here. In a recent review, professionals noticed some of the other behaviours which showed the child was in distress have stopped since being in the home.

The registered manager responds efficiently and effectively to allegations made by children. She ensures that senior leaders and the relevant external professionals are informed to safeguard children. As a result, investigations are carried out in a timely manner and appropriate decisions are made to maintain children's safety and well-being.

Staff educate children about keeping themselves safe when there are safeguarding issues. They do this creatively by making posters and completing workbooks with children. This helps children to understand behaviours that are acceptable and how to build safe relationships as they get older. This promotes positive behaviour and helps children to feel safe.

Staff do their very best to keep children safe online. The manager has good monitoring systems in place to ensure that children are as safe as possible when using the internet. Staff use creative activities to educate children about online safety by having group discussions with them. This supports children to develop skills to understand the risks posed by others.

Staff respond quickly when children go missing from the home. A previous child went missing several times. Staff followed the child's protocols and worked in partnership with the police to return the child to the home. Furthermore, return home interviews were completed and staff explored how the child was feeling with them; sharing information with other agencies to keep the child safe. This means that children benefit from well-coordinated care from all professionals working with them.

Incidents that require the use of restraint are rare. Staff support children's behaviour by using praise and encouragement to build on their strengths. However, in the few restraints that have taken place, staff did not always use strategies to help the child become calm before a restraint was used. On one occasion, a staff member, who was not properly trained, restrained a child in an unskilled way, which led to the child becoming distressed. The registered manager investigated this promptly and this has not occurred since.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A child-focused manager leads the home. She is ambitious for the children and wants the best for them. She has a good understanding of the children's progress and their needs. This ensures that children receive good-quality care.

The home has a core team of regular staff which provides consistent care for children. The registered manager has worked overtime to cover vacancies, which has reduced the need for the use of casual staff in the home. This means that children are consistently cared for by people who know them well.

Staff are provided with in-house coaching from a trained therapist who helps to embed trauma-informed approaches to children's care. For example, the home's therapist meets children and staff weekly to offer training and guidance on the best way to care for the children. Consequently, staff told the inspector that they are starting to look at why children may act the way they do, rather than just looking at the behaviour on its own. This helps children to receive care from adults who are empathetic to their needs.

The registered manager has good oversight of the home. She makes good use of the audit tools and support systems in place. As a result, she understands the home's strengths and weaknesses. She regularly reviews the quality of care in the home and takes action to improve this where needed. However, the registered manager has missed some shortfalls which have been identified in this inspection in her oversight. For example, the registered manager has not recorded some important direct work which was going to be done with children to act on a complaint that a child made. As a result, it is unclear what support the child received after the incident.

Individual staff supervision is often not practice related. This means that staff do not have opportunities to discuss the children's care and reflect on their own role in caring for the children on a one-to-one basis. This prevents staff from fully embedding good practice and professionally developing in their roles.

Most staff have completed the necessary training to meet the needs of the children in the home. However, one member of staff has not completed safeguarding training in over 16 months, which is contrary to the home's policy. Not all staff have had training in mental health, self-harm, social media safety or to help them understand specific diagnoses that children may have. Also, the registered manager has not always been proactive in ensuring that staff receive training when shortfalls in their practice have been identified. This means that staff are not always equipped to respond to the individual needs of the children.

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>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>	8 April 2022
<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 the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(b))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that staff act appropriately to de-escalate situations when children become distressed.</p> <p>It also relates to ensuring that restraint is only used when necessary, using approved methods, by suitably skilled staff.</p>	8 April 2022
<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>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p>	8 April 2022

<p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that staff have the training required to meet the needs of all children.</p>	
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that staff are skilled to meet the needs of new children moving into the home.</p>	8 April 2022
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that all staff receive supervision which is practice related.</p>	8 April 2022
<p>The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (3))</p>	8 April 2022

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff provide a nurturing and supportive environment that is homely. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: 1227869

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes Limited

Registered provider address: 3 Rayns Way, Syston, Leicestershire LE7 1PF

Responsible individual: Benjamin Jordan

Registered manager: Rebecca Linden

Inspector

Fiona Roche, Social Care Inspector

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