

2647153

Registered provider: West Sussex County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by the local authority and provides care and accommodation for up to six children aged between 12 and 18 years. The home consists of a four-bedroom home and a separate two-bedroom bungalow for independent living. This home cares for children who present with social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

The home and manager were registered on 2 September 2021.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 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: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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Not previously inspected		
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Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children's progress is positive, and relationships are forming between children and a growing staff team. The home has recently opened and offers children the opportunity to see their families and friends, and to enjoy activities and new experiences that improve their independence skills. Children are happy, settled and optimistic about their futures. All children told the inspector that they enjoyed living there.

Children's educational outcomes are less positive. All three children are not attending school. One child has a job, one child refuses to attend their school despite the best efforts of staff and another child has no formal school placement. The child with no school placement does have access to a tutor, but this does not allow the child to meet friends or learn from a varied range of subjects.

Children prepare for their futures from the minute they arrive. Children know their plans, and the staff promote independent living, contact with families and engagement with the wider community. This allows children to build links in preparation for their next steps, and they are involved in these plans. One child commented that the home 'allowed me to try independence before I spread my wings'.

Parents and professionals are positive about the role staff and the manager play in the children's lives. Feedback highlighted that communication is effective, and the dedication of staff has allowed one child to have more regular contact with their siblings. One child's mother said, 'This place has been amazing for [my child]. They have settled, and staff have been brilliant. Contact has been excellent.' This has led to plans for one child to reunify with his family soon.

Children's day-to-day experience of the home is positive. Children are positive about the staff and often seek them out to chat, play games or watch TV with. Staff support children in making t-shirts, playing board games and going on bike rides, and children value this time and developing bonds. This has helped children settle, and one child has seen a dramatic improvement in their behaviours that were previously cause for concern.

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

Staff carefully consider children's risks and use systems to effectively monitor and review them. This has resulted in an improved response to a child who goes missing and improvements being made to the security of the home. This lets children feel cared about while in their home or community.

The response to children going missing has recently improved. One child is frequently reported missing, and recently these episodes have increased to several

days at a time. Staff have good links with specialists in the local authority, and there are good multi-agency meetings. However, missing plans lacked staff actions to look for children when they were missing. This was due to insufficient staffing. This has been addressed and staff from another home have supported this home, meaning a more robust plan has been implemented to support the child.

Children learn how to manage their emotions and feelings, and staff are committed to support children to do this. Children express emotions via therapy, key-work sessions, debriefs and day-to-day discussion and this helps the child to feel valued. This has led to a reduction in the use of physical intervention and a reduction the number of incidents that previously resulted in damage to the property. The child commented, 'I have got better with my anger and realising what happens because of staff.'

Staff know their role in safeguarding, and they have a positive relationship with the designated officer. This allows allegations of concerns to be shared quickly and appropriate action to be taken. Children then feel listened to, and this has created a culture of openness. Children know how to make a complaint but have not felt the need to.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is overseen by a leadership team that is committed to achieve the best for the home and children. The purpose-built home allows children to benefit from all modern luxuries, and plans are in place to make it even more homely in the future.

Leaders are clear on the progress children are making and keen to celebrate this. When children hit milestones, however small they may seem, children are given rewards and praise, which encourages them to continue their progress. One child is preparing for independence and is being sensitively supported at a pace which suits their needs. This has allowed the child to achieve and feel optimistic about their future. The child is currently learning to drive and has been supported to find a job.

Recruitment of new staff has been difficult, and some of this has been attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on staffing. Several new staff have entered the home, but the recruitment did not consider the full work history of staff, nor did it explore any gaps in employment prior to the last five years. A lack of curiosity about employment history, gaps in employment and reasons for leaving roles with vulnerable people do not give managers enough information to satisfy themselves that the person applying is of good character.

Leaders are aware of the home's strengths and weaknesses, and their passion to improve is clear. Plans are already in place to continue to improve staff training, the monitoring of records and safer recruitment practice. Health and safety monitoring and the appointment of a quality assurance lead are used to ensure checks and records are updated. This allows the manager to focus on improvements in the home, allowing his staff and children to continue to make progress.

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> <p>This is to ensure that staff actively challenge relevant agencies to ensure children's educational needs are met.</p>	30 March 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> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child. (Regulation 13 (1) (2)(d))</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring that there are enough staff working to carry out agreed actions identified in children's missing plans.</p>	30 March 2022
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p>	30 March 2022

full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.
(Regulation 32 (1) (3)(d))

This relates to ensuring that all staff have a full work history prior to employment in the home and that gaps in employment and reasons for leaving roles with vulnerable people are considered.

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: 2647153

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: West Sussex County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, West Street, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 1RG

Responsible individual: Julian Skeates

Registered manager: Eerik Sjostedt

Inspector

Matt Nicholls, Social Care Inspector

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