

SC483220

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 run by a private company. It may provide care for up to five children who may have social and/or emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2022. At the time of the inspection, the manager was on a period of absence. An interim manager is in post.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 August 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 9 February 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/02/2022	Full	Good
11/02/2020	Full	Outstanding
21/08/2018	Full	Outstanding
10/10/2017	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children who live at the home are making progress in their lives. A programme psychologist, who is based at the home, oversees a therapeutic programme that supports children to process difficult historical events from their childhood. This has enabled the children's respective local authorities to progress children's care plans.

There have been numerous changes to the staffing of the home. This has caused staff inconsistency with the behaviour management of children. Senior management have actively addressed this issue and, with the support of the programme psychologist, the potential disruption to children has been minimised.

The home's placement plans clearly outline the child's needs and compliment the child's statutory documentation. This provides evidence of good collaboration between services. However, the language used in the home's placement plans is not child orientated. This means that children are less likely to read and understand the issues that staff are trying to help them with.

The psychologist plays a key role in supporting children. The psychologist's knowledge of the children ensures that meetings with partner agencies, such as CAMHS, are effective. This benefits children by ensuring that they receive a service, and that any external intervention is likely to meet the child's needs.

Staff have forged strong ties with the children's respective schools. Staff swiftly address any emerging issues and, for children who have Education Health and Care Plans, staff ensure that schools effectively review and implement them. Staff therefore demonstrate the value of education by ensuring that they support children to achieve their academic potential.

The wishes and feelings of children are central to how the home is run. Children have a purposeful say over how they would like to be cared for and what they hope to achieve. As a result, children feel valued and motivated to work towards the goals they have set for themselves.

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

There is good recording of significant incidents that involve children. This creates transparency around how well staff support children in crisis. However, there are a minority of reports that provide evidence of the need for staff to be more consistent in their practice. Establishing staff consistency is more likely to create better harmony among the group of children.

The manager ensures that there is good debrief for staff and children following any incident of restraint. However, there was one example that required more scrutiny

from the manager to assist staff learning and reflection. The leadership team recognised that the opportunity for staff learning in this instance had fallen short, so they activated a learning process. This provides evidence of the wider management structure playing its role in establishing a learning environment. In doing so, this helps to improve the care of the children through enhancing staff awareness.

Risk assessments are succinct, clear and are frequently reviewed by the manager. This practice increases staff confidence when managing situations involving an unhealthy level of risk to the child. In such instances, staff are clear about what actions to take, and children are therefore safer because of this.

There is an ethos in the staff team of working restoratively alongside external professionals. Although staff have relied on police intervention to support some children in distress, this has never resulted in children receiving a criminal conviction. This approach to care has improved children's life chances.

Staff do not frequently need to report children as missing people to the police. This illustrates that children ultimately view the setting as their home. When staff need to report children as missing persons to the police, staff are robust in their response and have a clear protocol to follow in order to ensure the child's safe return home.

Management actively ensures that the staff team does not work in isolation, particularly when there have been significant events concerning children. The inspector noted good collaboration between management and a multitude of professionals. This demonstrates that there is a good safeguarding ethos within the home, which promotes external agencies to be accountable in their safeguarding duties towards children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Although there has been instability in the home's management structure, the organisation has minimised the potential impact on children. Senior managers have achieved this through swiftly reinstating an interim manager who has an established working knowledge of the home and good relationships with the children who live there. This action has significantly reduced the risk of children suffering unnecessary anxiety around the daily management of the home.

The organisation completes a timely review of care arrangements report. This ensures that staff performance is frequently appraised and increases the manager's capacity to improve the standards of care in the home. However, the report does not clearly record the period that the review covers, neither does it state the author or dates of when the author quoted children. These issues reduce the reader's ability to accurately analyse the report.

The referral process for children is thorough. The manager records an assessment of children's needs, ensuring that there is clear analysis. The manager also consults staff within this process. This provides evidence of accountability and transparency

around decision-making. The referral process strengthens the likelihood of the child's time at the home succeeding.

Senior managers have direct contact and a presence in the home. They are known to the children and the staff. This creates additional opportunities for them to scrutinise staff practice and offer constructive challenge with regard to the care of the children. Furthermore, it provides children and staff with a sense of feeling valued by operational managers who are not involved in the daily running of the home.

The independent visitor process is effective. Managers respond to recommendations that the independent visitor makes. This has resulted in senior management providing a thorough action plan to address perceived shortfalls in practice. This ensures that poor practice does not become embedded in the home.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should develop the capacity and competence of staff to build constructive, warm relationships with children that actively promote positive behaviour, provides the foundations for managing any negative behaviour. Staff should have the skills to respond to each child's individual behaviour. Where necessary they should manage conflict, maintain constructive dialogues and react appropriately if challenged by a child in their care ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.14).
- The registered person should actively encourage children to read their records and to add further information to them. Children should be regularly reminded of their rights to see information kept about them and be given information about how they might be supported to access their records in later life. The language used in children's records needs to be child friendly to assist children's understanding of what is being written about them ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.6).
- The registered person should undertake a review that focuses on the quality of the care provided by the home, the experiences of children living there and the impact the care is having on outcomes and improvements for the children. The report needs to clearly highlight the dates covered within the review period and name the author of the report. The review report would benefit from making the date clear when children provide verbal statements for the review, which the author goes on to quote in their report. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.2).

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: SC483220

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Nicola Brown

Registered manager: Reece Noble

Inspector

Steve Guirey, Social Care Inspector

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