

1254055

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private organisation and is registered to provide care for up to four children.

The home's ethos of care is one of immediate acceptance and empathy, irrespective of a child's circumstances. The home is flexible and responds to each child's unique set of needs.

There is a registered manager in post. She registered with Ofsted in June 2021.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor.

Date of last inspection: 1 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/03/2022	Full	Good
28/05/2019	Full	Outstanding
08/05/2018	Full	Outstanding
08/01/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Despite serious failings in the leadership and management of this home and some poor safeguarding practices, the outcomes for children are strong.

Since the last inspection, four children have remained living in the home. They all spent time talking to inspectors about their progress and experiences and about their view of living in the home. They have lived in the home for a long time and positive relationships were observed with staff. There was laughter in the home and children and staff were observed enjoying activities including cooking, reading books and playing games with staff on their games consoles.

All children could identify an adult they can talk to if they are worried or upset. They understood the complaints procedures but said that they did not need to use a formal process as staff would help them if needed. The staff team is stable and provides a consistent level of care and support.

Children are in education, training and employment. They are reported to have made progress at their individual provisions. However, records in the home do not include the reported progress that children have made. Furthermore, not all staff are aware of the provisions that children attend or the levels that they are working towards.

Children's health and well-being are promoted well by staff. Staff ensure that healthcare plans identify children's individual needs. The home's therapist visits regularly and works with each child individually. However, the work done and strategies identified to support children's mental health and emotional well-being are not included in the child's care plan.

Boundaries in the home are, on occasions, blurred and not all staff challenge inappropriate language. Boundaries are not age-appropriate, with all children going to bed at 8pm, despite one child being 17 years old. Furthermore, one child has access to information about other children that should not be readily available to them.

Family time is consistently promoted. Staff provide support for children and individual family members during planned sessions. For some children, family time has improved and now includes overnight stays. This has helped children re-establish relationships with people who are important in their lives.

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

Safeguarding practice in this home is not robust and does not promote the safety and welfare of the children. The registered manager and staff do not appropriately

respond to incidents that have occurred, nor do they implement effective strategies to safeguard and protect the children living in the home.

The registered manager and staff demonstrate a lack of understanding in relation to their roles and responsibilities in protecting children and have not routinely taken effective action when there have been serious concerns about children's welfare. They lack professional curiosity about the risks that children may face in the community. One child had got a job and was being paid a £100 a day cash in hand. Staff were unclear about what the nature of this employment was and there was no evidence to indicate that the registered manager had undertaken any checks to be satisfied that this was safe, and that the child was not being exploited.

The registered manager and staff are not able to consistently identify when children are at risk of harm. This means that there are missed opportunities for the staff to take effective action to reduce potential risks to children. For example, it has been identified that there is a significant risk for one child around internet safety and phone use. The risk assessment included conflicting information about the strategies to minimise risks and staff were unclear about the actions they should take. Staff said that they have reported concerns about the risk management strategies to the manager, but there was no evidence to show these concerns had been taken seriously. As a result, the risks have not reduced.

Allegations have not been reported in line with safeguarding procedures. A child had reported that they had sustained injuries during an incident involving a member of staff responsible for their care. Despite the registered manager reviewing the report of the incident, the allegations were not identified and no other safeguarding professionals were notified. Failure to follow safeguarding procedures leaves children and staff at risk.

The registered manager and staff have failed to follow the home's internal medication policy when administering and recording children's prescribed medication. Records had not been completed to show the name of the drug to be administered or the amount given. Despite regular medication audits being conducted, these shortfalls were not identified.

Recording in the home is of poor quality and lacks accountability. Leaders were not aware of the extent of the safeguarding concerns identified at this inspection. There is insufficient management oversight of the quality of care. Records are inconsistent and do not include information that should alert managers to the fact that further enquiry is necessary. However, on several occasions, this information has not been identified as needing further enquiries. This fails to safeguard all involved.

Incident sheets demonstrate that de-escalation techniques and restraint had been used to minimise the risks from one child's escalating behaviours. However, records have not been completed in line with the home's policies and procedures. There is no oversight of restraint practices and no evidence of debriefs with all involved. The lack of adequate scrutiny of incidents may lead to unsafe care practices.

Children said that staff restrict their activities or remove personal items as a consequence for poor behaviour. Staff confirmed this is common practice. However, records are not kept of consequences. This does not enable managers to have a clear oversight of practice to ensure that consequences are proportionate and fair.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The registered manager is not leading and managing the home in a manner that is consistent with the aims outlined in the home's statement of purpose. They do not have sufficient oversight of the documentation regarding the experiences and progress of the children and have failed to ensure that each child's journey is clear or identify poor practices in respect of safeguarding. The failure to address the safeguarding concerns means that the safety and outcomes for children are compromised.

Risk management and behaviour management in the home are not robust. The content of assessments is confusing and, in some instances, factually incorrect. Risk assessments and behaviour management plans fail to provide the staff team with appropriate strategies to manage children's behaviour or minimise risk. Despite managers and staff attending training in safeguarding and behaviour management, the shortfalls identified during this inspection have proved the training to be ineffective. Furthermore, it demonstrates that not all staff have the knowledge needed to support the children safely in the home and in the community.

Monitoring by managers is ineffective. The registered manager has not implemented effective monitoring systems to ensure improvements in the quality of care provided to the children. Despite the responsible individual raising this as an area of concern, no improvements have been made.

The registered manager has not taken sufficient action when staff reported that they had highlighted concerning safeguarding practices in the home regarding internet use and children's safety. This fails to demonstrate that managers clearly understand their roles and responsibilities in protecting children.

Staff report that they are supported by the management team and have regular supervision. However, the records are variable in quality and actions identified for improvements in practice are not consistently agreed and reviewed at the next sessions. This is a missed opportunity to support the continued improvement of staff practices.

Not all staff were aware of their responsibilities in protecting children. One member of staff had not attended safeguarding training for over 18 months. This is despite the company having a training matrix that identified training courses that had still to be completed. This fails to ensure that all staff have up-to-date skills and training to safely support children.

Internal and external monitoring of the home is not effective. The management team and independent visitor failed to identify potential safeguarding concerns for

children. The lack of analysis has resulted in the management team's failure to identify when children have alleged that they had suffered harm, had been restrained by staff or had not received medication in line with their prescription.

There is a lack of management oversight in the home because of insufficient management arrangements. For example, physical interventions and missing-from-home reports do not contain a strong management evaluation and have not been signed off by senior staff. This has meant that shortfalls in staff practice have not been identified or addressed, and these shortfalls could continue to go unchecked.

Following the inspection, a case review was held, and two compliance notices were issued under section 22a of the Care Standards Act 2000. These relate to regulation 12 (the protection of children standard) and regulation 13 (the leadership and management standard). Ofsted will monitor the notices.

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>*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;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies;</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;</p> <p>that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health.</p> <p>This is specifically in relation to risk management and risk assessments; these need to be robust and followed. Staff need to understand when and how to take action to reduce the risk of harm to the child.</p>	9 December 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 staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;</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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(d)(e)(f))</p>	<p>9 December 2022</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 arrangements are in place to—</p> <p>ensure the effective induction of each child into the home;</p> <p>manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and</p> <p>plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority;</p>	<p>9 December 2022</p>

that each child's relevant plans are followed;	
that staff help each child to access and contribute to the records kept by the registered person in relation to the child. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(c)(f))	
<p>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23 (1))</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring that records are accurate and include all relevant information and staff understand actions to take in relation to controlled drugs and prescribed medication.</p>	9 December 2022
	9 December 2022
<p>The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out—</p> <p>how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and</p> <p>the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home.</p> <p>The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it.</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>the name of the child;</p> <p>details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;</p> <p>the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;</p>	9 December 2022

<p>the name of the person who used the measure ('the user'), and of any other person present when the measure was used;</p> <p>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and</p> <p>a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;</p> <p>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")—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>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.</p> <p>(Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (2) (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p>	
<p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which—</p> <p>include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child;</p> <p>are kept up to date: and</p> <p>are signed and dated by the author of each entry.</p> <p>(Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))</p>	9 December 2022
<p>Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home.</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4: and</p> <p>ensure that the records are kept up to date.</p> <p>(Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b))</p>	9 December 2022

<p>In particular, ensure that the records include a copy of the staff duty roster of people working at the home, a record of the actual rotas worked and a record of any person who works at any time at the home, including the registered manager.</p>	
<p>The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether—</p> <p>children are effectively safeguarded; and</p> <p>the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (4)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, the independent visitor should review the environment and identify any risks and hazards. The report should provide a clear statement of opinion and provide robust evaluation of practice in the home.</p>	<p>9 December 2022</p>

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: 1254055

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

Registered provider address: Sandcastle Care Ltd, 49 Whitegate Drive, Blackpool
FY3 9DG

Responsible individual: Andrew Rourke

Registered manager: Natalie McGarry

Inspector

Michelle Edge, Social Care Inspector

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