

SC037447

Registered provider: West Sussex County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to care for up to 16 children aged between five and 18 years old with a learning disability. This is a local authority home that provides short- and long-stay accommodation.

A suitably qualified manager has been registered with Ofsted since March 2007.

Inspection dates: 28 February and 1 March 2023

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: 14 April 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/04/2021	Full	Outstanding
02/09/2019	Full	Outstanding
07/01/2019	Full	Good
08/08/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last full inspection, plans have been put in place for extensive development and renovation of the children's accommodation. Children in long-stay care are now living in the short-breaks part of the home, while children on short breaks are now staying in a separate two-bedded building in the same grounds. There will therefore be a reduction in the number of children receiving short-break packages until the building work is complete. Senior leaders estimate this will take approximately 12 months.

Staff are skilled and knowledgeable and have a good insight and understanding of each child's needs. Children have positive relationships with staff, who they trust.

Staff communicate with children through observation, speech and other communication systems. This helps children to express their views and make clear choices. Children have been involved in making decisions about aspects of their home, including the decor and themes for bedrooms. This is helping children feel part of the substantial development plans for the home and giving them a voice in some of this decision-making.

Staff create interesting display boards in the home. These include certificates of achievements, children's artwork and key topics relevant to the children. These are displayed in an easy-to-read and purposeful way for the children to digest and reflect on.

Staff are aware of children's targets and their responsibilities in helping children achieve these. Staff demonstrate good knowledge and were seen in practice helping children to achieve their multi-agency goals. Every bit of children's progress is noticed, valued and recognised by the staff team.

The long-serving and committed staff team understands the needs and wishes of the children very well. This is helping children to grow in confidence and develop independence. One parent spoke proudly about their child independently making their bed at home for the first time. This demonstrates children's ability to transfer skills from one home to another.

Using therapies funded by the local authority, staff support and prepare children extremely well for difficult life events. Short stories that describe social situations, photos and personal memories help children to try and understand complicated and challenging messages. This means children are receiving sensitive and well-planned care.

Throughout the inspection, inspectors received positive feedback from external professionals and staff. A staff member said, 'I think this is an amazing place to work and I am proud of all the achievements our children reach'. A social worker

said, '[Child] has formed really trusting relationships with staff, he is well-cared for and understood'. Another professional said, 'I have full confidence in the staff'. This clearly demonstrates how well children are supported by a committed and trusted staff team.

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

The registered manager and the staff team are acutely aware of the risks and vulnerabilities of the children they care for. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of safeguarding processes and, when needed, act fast and responsibly to protect children from any potential harm and danger.

Staff actively promote children's health and emotional well-being. They provide children with appropriate support to ensure that medical appointments are kept. For one child, staff made short stories that describe social situations and gradually introduced a healthcare setting to the child in preparation for a routine visit. It is this thoughtful attention to detail that protects children from potentially upsetting and distressing experiences.

Risk assessments guide staff to help minimise risk. Carefully assessed staffing levels ensure that children receive appropriate support and supervision while being free to move safely in their home.

Overall, medication is well managed, in consultation with parents and carers. Staff store children's medication appropriately and records completed by staff of the administration of children's medication are accurate and clear. However, there have been examples of staff crushing one child's medication, without evidence of having consulted healthcare professionals. This is a missed opportunity to check if this practice is appropriate.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The culture of the home is characterised by high expectations and aspiration for all children. The ethos and objectives of the home are demonstrated in practice, and staff are unanimous in saying that children are at the centre of all decisions.

Staff have the necessary skills and training to meet children's needs. The registered manager has researched and sourced additional training to strengthen the home's culture and increase staff awareness of children's risks and vulnerabilities. Staff say this training was extremely helpful and thought-provoking.

Staff supervisions are timely and reflective and aid staff's professional development. Staff say they feel well supported by their line managers and can speak to them outside of their arranged supervisions.

Overall, children's care plans have been updated by managers to reflect the children's internal moves. However, inspectors did find examples of records not

reflecting these current changes. Although this omission has not impacted on the quality of care children receive, it has the potential to hinder safe working practices.

Since the last full inspection, the registered manager has received two complaints from parents. These were managed appropriately. One of the parents said they were satisfied their complaint had been resolved within a good time frame. However, the registered manager did not keep a good record of this, including the conclusions and subsequent outcomes. Although this information was found during the inspection, it demonstrates a lack of managerial oversight and good-quality record-keeping.

The decision to move children into different bedrooms at the opposite end of the property means the conditions of registration for children are now incorrect. Senior leaders were quick to recognise this as part of the inspection and plan to take the necessary action and submitting revised information to the regulator.

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 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>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(h))</p>	1 June 2023
<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>	1 June 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should, when the home has questions or concerns about a child’s medication, approach an expert such as a general practitioner, community pharmacist or designated nurse for looked after children. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 35, paragraph 7.15)

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: SC037447

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: Susan Wadey

Inspectors

Kelly Monniot, Social Care Inspector

Lisa O'Donovan, Regulatory Inspection Manager

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