

1223681

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care for up to three children who may experience social or emotional difficulties.

The registered manager post has been vacant since November 2022. A new interim manager was appointed in April 2023. At the time of the inspection, they had not yet submitted an application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 April 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **inadequate**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded. The care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not all making progress.

Date of last inspection: 11 October 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/10/2022	Full	Good
11/11/2021	Interim	Improved effectiveness
19/05/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
08/10/2019	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Two children were living at the home at the time of this inspection. There are serious and widespread shortfalls in safeguarding practice. This is due to poor care planning and risk management arrangements. This is having a negative effect on children's safety, well-being, experiences and progress.

Not all children are making progress in education. One child has limited engagement with education and does not have a positive routine in place. Despite significant safeguarding failings, one child has made some progress with their education and volunteers for a local charity.

Children's physical and emotional health have not always been responded to effectively or immediately by the staff. This has left children vulnerable and their health and well-being compromised. One child said about her home, 'My house has gone downhill.'

Managers and staff have struggled to implement rules and boundaries in the home. Incidents of challenging behaviour, physical assaults and damage to property have increased. Children have received an inconsistent response from staff, who lack the knowledge, experience and skills to meet their needs.

The home is generally furnished to a good standard. However, considerable damage has been caused to doors and door frames in the hallway, there is graffiti in one room and one child's bedroom is untidy and defaced by graffiti and there were items in the room which were deemed unsafe for the child.

Children moving into the home do so in a planned way. However the manager has not ensured that all children's risk-taking behaviours have been thoroughly considered. This has led to children moving on from the home in an unplanned way, creating more disruption to their lives and giving them a negative experience of living at the home.

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

Children are not adequately protected, due to the manager and staff's safeguarding failings. Risk management plans and positive support plans are not kept up to date with current risks or do not include sufficient strategies to reduce or manage risk.

Staff do not consistently follow children's plans when they are missing from care. One child received an uncaring response from staff when they returned home following an episode of going missing. This does not make the child feel wanted,

safe or cared for. The child told the inspector they did not feel safe, as 'staff don't care'.

An allegation of abuse has not been managed in line with safeguarding procedures. When a child reported that they had been assaulted by a staff member, other staff failed to recognise this as a significant incident. Staff did not report the allegation in line with safeguarding and organisational procedures. The manager took action to notify the relevant professionals and agencies the following day.

Staff do not always take a strong and proactive approach to safely managing children's behaviour. There have been occasions when staff have not monitored the children and have not taken swift action to prevent an escalation of incidents. Consequently, children are not supported to understand and safely manage their own behaviour.

Staff are trained in physical intervention and de-escalation techniques. However, this has proved ineffective, as the staff have not always intervened. Staff have called the police out on several occasions to support them in managing the children's behaviour, which on one occasion led to a child being arrested.

At times, leaders and managers have provided support, guidance and instruction to the staff team in times of children's escalating behaviours. On occasions, the advice of the managers has not been acted on. This has left children inadequately safeguarded and their well-being not promoted.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There has not been a registered manager at the home since November 2022. The management arrangements that have been put in place have not ensured effective leadership and management.

Significant shortfalls in the management oversight of incidents and poor staff practice leave children inadequately cared for. Leaders and managers have not managed the home in a manner that is consistent with the aims outlined in the home's statement of purpose or policy and procedures.

Feedback from external professionals was mixed. One child's social worker was complimentary of the manager and staff and how the home has managed the child and their risk-taking behaviours.

Another professional was unsure if their child was safeguarded and felt incidents were becoming more severe and the children were impacting negatively on one another. They were unclear of all risks associated with their child, as this information had not been shared by the manager. This could impact negatively on the child seeing their family.

The manager does not use monitoring and reviewing systems effectively. This means shortfalls in practice are not identified. This impacts on the manager's

understanding of the children's progress and what needs to change to improve children's lives.

Staff receive regular supervision, however, shortfalls in practice have not been discussed. Staff say they feel supported by the leaders and managers and have regular team meetings where they can share ideas and practice.

Leaders and managers have not ensured staff from the company's sister home have received a thorough induction before working with the children. This means children are cared for by staff who do not know them or understand their risk-taking behaviour and how best to support them.

The new manager has identified some shortfalls in practice and the running of the home. He has plans in place to address the shortfalls over the coming months.

As a result of the serious and widespread shortfalls identified, Ofsted has issued a notice to restrict the accommodation of any further children at the home, to allow the provider time to address the concerns.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—</p> <p>meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that children’s bedrooms and the home’s hallways and the ‘selfie’ room are regularly maintained.</p>	<p>28 May 2023</p>
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans;</p>	<p>28 May 2023</p>

<p>help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;</p> <p>strive to gain each child’s respect and trust;</p> <p>de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children;</p> <p>understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and</p> <p>have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them; and</p> <p>that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(iv)(viii)(xi)(xii)(xiii)(b))</p>	
<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>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;</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>28 May 2023</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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(d))</p>	
<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>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;</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;</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h))</p>	<p>28 May 2023</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>28 May 2023</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;</p> <p>that each child’s relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c))</p>	
<p>Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 16 (5))</p>	28 May 2023
<p>The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which—</p> <p>sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect.</p> <p>The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular—</p> <p>provide for liaison and co-operation with any local authority which are, or may be, making a child protection enquiry in relation to a child accommodated in the home;</p> <p>provide for the prompt referral of an allegation about current or ongoing abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the home is located;</p> <p>provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response; (Regulation 34 (1)(b) (2)(a)(b)(d))</p>	28 May 2023
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation;</p> <p>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious;</p>	28 May 2023

<p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;</p> <p>a child protection enquiry involving a child —</p> <p>is instigated; or</p> <p>concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))</p>	
<p>When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—</p> <p>if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (2)(a))</p>	<p>28 May 2023</p>

Recommendation

- The registered person should seek to develop the home’s effective working relationships with each child’s placing authority and with other relevant persons. They should ensure that children’s independent reviewing officers are aware of all risks to children. These working relationships will also be key to success in delivering the care planning standard (regulation 14). (‘Guide to the Children’s Home Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 52, paragraph 10.3)

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: 1223681

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

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

Responsible individual: Amber Steib

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Julie Elder, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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