

# 1254055

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company and is registered to provide care for up to four children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

There has been no registered manager in post since November 2022.

### Inspection dates: 23 and 24 August 2023

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>requires improvement to be good</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

**Date of last inspection:** 13 December 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/12/2022	Full	Good
12/10/2022	Full	Inadequate
01/03/2022	Full	Good
28/05/2019	Full	Outstanding

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good**

The staff team has experienced significant instability and high turnover. While the children report several new faces, they all say that they have positive relationships with the staff team. Children agree that their routines, boundaries and activities have largely remained the same. Despite the turmoil the company has experienced, the team has successfully mitigated much of the impact on the children.

Children describe the home as 'sound' and say, 'We get to do fun things.' Staff offer children a variety of activities and outings, which supports positive and trusting relationships between the adults and children in the home. Staff encourage children to remain active and take care of their health and hygiene. When needed, staff take children to health appointments and ensure that they take their medication.

Staff support children with their education and encourage them to continue trying to improve. When children have finished school, staff support them to apply for and maintain jobs in the local area. During the summer holidays, managers have been proactively looking for a mainstream education placement for a child who was not in school when he recently moved into this home.

Children are supported to see their family and friends. Children say that staff listen to their wishes around visiting people who are important to them and share their views with professionals when needed. This helps children to develop and maintain positive relationships and supports them to understand their family identity.

This home is safe and has sufficient space for the children living there. New managers have identified several maintenance tasks that they are working through, which is improving the look and feel of the home. Children have not yet decorated their own bedrooms but will be given the opportunity to do so as part of the ongoing redecoration.

Staff carry out some direct work sessions with children. However, in some instances, required work has not been carried out to address children's presenting needs. This has contributed to one child having to move out of the home, as staff had not taken the actions needed to support the child with his behaviour.

Staff do not carry out regular work with older children to help them understand independent living skills. One child who moved out of this home into semi-independence had not carried out work on independent skills in over a year. Furthermore, when this work was carried out, the child consistently said that they did not know how to do many of the tasks discussed. This does not support children to be successful when they move out on their own.

Some staff do not know what the long-term plans are for the children. This means that staff are not able to support children to understand what will happen next in their lives. It also does not enable staff to ensure that children's individual needs are met.

**How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good**

Staff working with the children are subject to safer recruitment processes. Children feel safe and can identify staff in the home who they would speak to if they had any concerns. Children understand why rules and boundaries are in place and feel that staff consider their views.

Staff have developed trusting relationships with children. One child described the staff as being 'just the best people'. As a result, there have been no physical restraints and no allegations of harm against staff. Children know how to make a complaint but have not felt the need to do so.

Children's missing-from-care plans and risk assessments are updated regularly. When children go missing, staff follow their plans to keep them safe. However, staff recording of what they have done to keep children safe is often poor.

Professionals have mixed experiences of working with staff. There have been instances of good communication, but all professionals agree that communication with staff is declining. One social worker said that in one instance, the manager, who is no longer working at the home, did not follow a plan agreed at an earlier meeting. This does not demonstrate effective partnership working.

**The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate**

There has been no registered manager in the home since November 2022. An interim manager has been in post since the last inspection. However, they have not provided robust leadership and management of this home. In the two weeks before this inspection, a new management team has started in the home. During this short time, the team has identified most of the shortfalls found during this inspection. Although some steps have been taken to address these shortfalls, more time is needed for changes to take effect.

Staff report mixed feelings about support from managers, with some staff reporting kindness from their manager, but inadequate support. Staff do not feel consistently valued and are often not consulted about significant decisions affecting the home and the children living there. Some staff report feeling 'disposable' by senior managers in the company.

The manager has not had sufficient oversight of the home. As a result, they have not identified patterns and trends. This means that opportunities were missed to provide early support to a child who was subsequently moved out of the home due to increasing risks.

Recording and documentation have been poor. When other professionals have failed to provide the services required, there has been little challenge or escalation to ensure that children's needs are met.

Staff have not been supported to improve their practice. Staff have received supervision; however, this has been inconsistent in timing and in quality. Similarly, team meetings have not provided a space to reflect on practice or further develop the staff team.

Staff have completed mandatory training. However, they have not been provided with any additional training that is specific to the needs of the children. Not all staff have completed the necessary qualifications to work with vulnerable children within the expected time frames. There is little evidence of support or challenge from managers to enable staff to complete these qualifications.

Internal monitoring has been ineffective. Management review of the quality of care provided to children lacks evaluation and does not include actions to improve the experiences of children. External monitoring has provided some actions for improvement; however, these are not always relevant to the care of the children while clear shortfalls have been missed.

## 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 staff—</p> <p>help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult;</p> <p>make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(vi)(ix))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person should ensure that children who have a plan for semi-independent living are fully supported in developing their independent living skills.</p>	25 November 2023
<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>	25 November 2023

<p>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;</p> <p>encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;</p> <p>communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful;</p> <p>help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship;</p> <p>understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable;</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.</p> <p>(Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(xii)(xiii)(b))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person should ensure that each child is provided with proactive key-work sessions that are planned based on their presenting needs and feelings.</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>25 November 2023</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>demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—</p> <p>research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and</p> <p>feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received;</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)(g)(i)(ii)(h))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person should: have oversight of all work being carried out; ensure that work is evaluated to establish patterns and trends and identify areas of learning to make continuous improvements; ensure that staff are consulted about decisions and are provided with suitable development opportunities.</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>25 November 2023</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 each child’s relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person should ensure that staff understand and follow children’s plans.</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. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person should ensure that each child’s records are completed and maintained.</p>	<p>25 November 2023</p>
<p>The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children (“a quality of care review”) at least once every 6 months.</p> <p>In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p> <p>the quality of care provided for children;</p> <p>the feedback and opinions of children about the children’s home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and</p> <p>any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person should ensure that the quality of care review incorporates feedback from children, families and professionals. The quality of care review should be evaluative in nature and should identify learning from the past six months. This should then be carried forward to create an action plan with clear, measurable goals.</p>	<p>25 November 2023</p>

## Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff challenge other professionals and act as champions for the children to ensure that their needs are fully met. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 12, paragraph 2.8)
- The registered person should ensure that the independent person carries out a rigorous and impartial assessment of the care provided, taking into consideration information that is relevant to the care of the children and the leadership of the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.18)
- The registered person should ensure that staff receive consistent supervision from an experienced professional which enables them to reflect on their own practice and develop goals for continuous improvement. Recording of supervision sessions should be of consistently high quality. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

## 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:** 1254055

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Sandcastle Care Limited

**Registered provider address:** The Forge, Church Street West, Woking, Surrey  
GU21 6HT

**Responsible individual:** David Lahey

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Aislinn Cooper, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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