

1240573

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private organisation operates this home. The home provides care for up to four children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2020.

Three children were living at the home at the time of this inspection and were spoken to by the inspector.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 December 2023

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 and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected, and their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded. The care and experiences of children and young people are poor.

Date of last inspection: 21 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/03/2023	Full	Good
15/06/2021	Full	Good
23/07/2019	Full	Good
23/10/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Children's experiences and progress are limited due to ineffective care planning and significant shortfalls in safeguarding practice and the leadership and management of the home.

Leaders and managers failed to fully evaluate how staff could meet one child's needs prior to the child moving into the home. The child's risk taking behaviour was not managed effectively. This led to the child moving on from the home. The child received limited support and planning, creating more disruption to the child's life.

Staff lack access to important information about children's individual needs, particularly details outlined in local authority plans, health assessments and child looked after review minutes. Additionally, one child's looked after child review was not conducted within the required timeframe, and the manager did not address this with the placing local authority. This compromises the progress that children make and creates uncertainty about staff's ability to meet their needs effectively.

The manager and staff do not have access to children's relevant education plans such as the personal education plan. Staff are unsure if one child has an education health and care plan. Staff do not promote opportunities for informal learning or support children to build their independent life skills consistently. Consequently, not all children make sustained progress in relation to their education and independent skills.

Children say that they like living at the home, they feel safe and that staff help them to see their family and other significant people in their life. Professionals working with the children shared the same view. This means that children are helped to maintain relationships with people who are important to them. This supports the children's identity and creates a sense of belonging.

Areas of the home are dirty and require a deep clean and redecoration. The garden has a broken handrail and contains garden waste that has not been discarded appropriately. This makes the home and garden area uninviting for the children.

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

Children are not adequately protected due to the safeguarding failings. The manager and staff do not consistently and effectively address children's risk-taking behaviours. One child who has moved on from the home since the last inspection did not have an adequate risk management plan in place. Furthermore, the manager and staff failed to thoroughly assess a potential risk to this child, leading to a serious incident. As a consequence, there were no established and effective strategies identified for staff to implement in order to minimise and mitigate the identified risk.

The response to safeguarding incidents and risk management is insufficiently robust and lacks a proactive approach to reduce risk of harm to children. Staff did not report a serious incident to the management team for three days. On a separate occasion, there was a failure to seek medical advice or conduct the agreed and necessary observations for a child, placing the child at a serious risk of harm.

Shortfalls in safeguarding practice are not identified and addressed by leaders and managers. This means that children continue to be at risk of harm due to staff not having the required skills or knowledge to effectively respond to safeguarding incidents to keep them safe.

Children are not spoken to about their risk taking behaviours or supported to understand how to keep themselves safe. This means that children are unable to identify and reduce potential risks to themselves and others.

Staff members restrained a child on two occasions, and the manager has deemed that the holds applied were both proportionate and necessary for ensuring everyone's safety. There has also been a consequence for one child. However, the manager failed to document timely evaluations of the incidents and discussions with staff and the child. As a result, there were missed opportunities for the manager to promptly review and adjust staff practices and consider lessons learned in a timely manner.

There has been an incident of one child being missing from home. Staff took appropriate action and collaborated with the police to safely locate and return the child home. However, an independent return-home interview was not undertaken following the missing incident. This is a missed opportunity to identify triggers and implement new strategies to manage and mitigate the associated risks.

A fire risk assessment carried out by an external company identified a variety of high risk and medium risk hazards. Effective action has not been taken to address the issues in the recommended timescales. Furthermore, not all staff have received adequate training in fire safety. Consequently, the safety of children, staff and visitors to the home is seriously compromised.

The manager has assessed the location of the home and although the location is deemed to be low risk, parts of the assessment does not accurately reflect the area in which the home is located. Therefore, full consideration has not been given to the risks in the area for children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The manager holds a relevant management qualification. The manager has submitted a voluntary cancellation to the regulator to deregister as the manager of the home in the coming weeks. The manager was unavailable at the time of the inspection. A lead practitioner led the inspection.

Significant shortfalls in the management oversight of incidents and poor staff practice leave children inadequately cared for. Leaders and managers have not implemented effective monitoring and reviewing systems. This means that there are missed opportunities to identify practice shortfalls and make improvements in the quality of care provided to children in a timely manner.

Staff feel supported by the management team. However, staff do not routinely receive supervision in line with the home's statement of purpose. Two lead practitioner's who complete supervision with staff have not received training in this area of practice. Team meetings do not regularly take place with all staff in attendance. Staff have not had their performance appraised annually. This demonstrates the staff are not fully supported in their role and their practice is not regularly evaluated. Leaders and managers are unable to assure themselves that staff continue to meet the needs of the children.

There are shortfalls in safer recruitment practices. There was an incomplete application form when a bank staff member transitioned to a permanent role, the absence of a check on their disclosure and barring service and the failure to obtain photo ID. Additionally, when staff from other homes within the organisation work at this home, they do not undergo an induction process. These lapses in recruitment processes expose children to vulnerability and the risk of harm.

The manager and staff do not use research to inform their practice or seek feedback from the other professionals such as, social workers and independent reviewing officers working with the children. Therefore, care planning for children is compromised and there are missed opportunities to gain a broader understanding of children's needs.

Ofsted were not notified in a timely manner about a significant event in the home. Therefore, the regulator was unable to monitor the home effectively to ensure that children were safe. The manager has not escalated any shortfalls in documentation provided by placing authorities to them.

One requirement raised at the last inspection has been met. One requirement has been re-stated.

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>In meeting the quality standards -</p> <p>If the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (c))</p> <p>This Specifically relates to ensuring that leaders and managers request and follow up placing local Authorities for any outstanding documentation in a timely manner.</p>	4 February 2024
<p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</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; and</p> <p>enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1) (2)(c)(i)(ii))</p> <p>This specifically relates to leaders and managers ensuring that the condition of the home and garden are improved and maintained to a good standard.</p>	4 February 2024
<p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p>	4 February 2024

<p>help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study;</p> <p>promote opportunities for each child to learn informally. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(v))</p> <p>This specifically relates to leaders and managers ensuring that children's personal education plans and any education health and care plans are available for staff to follow. To ensure that when children are not in full time formal education a plan is in place to guide staff to support informal learning opportunities.</p>	
<p>The health and well-being standard is that—</p> <p>the health and well-being needs of children are met;</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff help each child to—</p> <p>achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 10 (1)(a) (2)(a)(i))</p> <p>This specifically relates to leaders and managers ensuring that children's health assessments are available for staff to follow.</p>	<p>4 February 2024</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>4 February 2024</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>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 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)(v)(vi)(vii)(d))</p> <p>This requirement is re-stated.</p> <p>This specifically relates to leaders and managers ensuring that all known risks to children are captured in risk management plans and strategies are implemented to manage and reduce risks. To ensure that staff regularly talk to the children about risk taking behaviours. To ensure that all staff have relevant training in substance misuse, child protection and safeguarding practices. To ensure that all hazards identified in the fire risk assessment are addressed.</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>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>4 February 2024</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; and</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)(b)(c)(g)(i)(ii)(h))</p> <p>This specifically relates to leaders and managers ensuring that consistent team meetings take place and that all staff regularly attend. To ensure that feedback is gathered and acted on from professionals working with the children. To ensure that all lead practitioner's receive supervision training. To ensure that relevant research informs staff practice and there is robust and effective monitoring and reviewing systems in place.</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>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>that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(i)(iii)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to leaders and managers ensuring that staff have access to children's looked after review minutes and looked after child review's take place in a timely manner. To ensure that children have effectively planned</p>	<p>4 February 2024</p>

<p>moves in and out of the home. To ensure that careful consideration is taken when assessing whether the staff can effectively meet the needs of the child prior to them moving into the home.</p>	
<p>After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must—</p> <p>take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children’s home;</p> <p>make arrangements for persons working at the home to receive suitable training in fire prevention. (Regulation 25 (1)(a)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to leaders and managers ensuring that staff are all suitably trained in fire safety.</p>	<p>4 February 2024</p>
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children’s home; or</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a) (3)(d))</p> <p>This specifically relates to leaders and managers ensuring that safer recruitment principles are applied before new staff work at the home.</p>	<p>4 February 2024</p>
<p>The registered person must—</p> <p>ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction;</p> <p>The registered person must operate a disciplinary procedure which, in particular—</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>undertake appropriate continuing professional development;</p>	<p>4 February 2024</p>

<p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and</p> <p>have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (1)(a) (4)(a)(b)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to leaders and managers ensuring that new staff have an induction to the home. To ensure that staff have the opportunity to continue their professional development and for this to be documented. To ensure that staff have regular supervision in line with the home's statement of purpose and have their fitness to perform appraised annually.</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> <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>4 February 2024</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. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to leaders and managers ensuring that documentation in relation to physical interventions and consequences are recorded within the required timescales.</p>	
<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> <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 (a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))</p> <p>This specifically relates to leaders and managers ensuring that all serious incidents are notified to the regulator without delay.</p>	<p>4 February 2024</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return-home interview.

('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

- The registered person should ensure that the review of the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises considers all known risks relating to the location of the home. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

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: 1240573

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: Steven Lambert

Registered manager: Richard Taylor

Inspector

Julie Elder, Social Care Inspector

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