

# SC037454

Registered provider: West Sussex County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is operated by the local authority. It is registered to provide care for up to five children who experience social and emotional difficulties and have mental health difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, one child was living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2024 and is suitably qualified.

### Inspection dates: 4 and 5 September 2024

**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:** 9 May 2024

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** inadequate

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/05/2024	Full	Inadequate
03/05/2023	Full	Good
08/11/2022	Full	Good
02/08/2022	Full	Inadequate

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Since the last full inspection in May 2024, two children have moved on from the home. One child moved into a semi-independent home, and the other child moved to a specialist provision. This move was well planned to ensure that the child's safety and well-being were paramount, while giving the child as much control in the decision as possible. One child has remained living in the home and was present during the inspection. They did not wish to speak with the inspector.

The child's professional network and the manager have worked together to support the child to return to education following a period of non attendance. This has been done gently, at a child-focused pace, and with consideration on how best to support the child. This is to achieve the best outcomes and make this a positive, supportive transition for the child.

The staff encourage the child to attend routine and regular health appointments, although these can often be declined. Alternative options are explored, such as health professionals visiting the child at home, and staff have discussions with the child about their health and well-being to continue to encourage them to access these services.

If there are concerns about the child's emotional well-being, or if support is needed, staff receive additional training to support the child with this from the relevant professionals. For example, the in-house family psychologist has provided training to staff in trauma and attachment. This has helped staff to change the way they support the child with their trauma and emotions.

The staff have positive relationships with the child living in the home, and these relationships have blossomed recently. The staff are proactive in trying to encourage the child to participate in activities such as quizzes, games, and going for a drive when they struggle to spend time outside of the home. Consequently, the child is spending more time engaging with staff and having fun. However, staff are not always aware of who the child may be talking to when using social media or playing online games, which could pose a risk to the child's safety. Senior leaders agree that boundaries around this need to change, and they have plans to implement these changes to ensure that the child is safe online.

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

Children's meetings are held weekly and give staff and children an opportunity to discuss current affairs, any concerns, views or wishes they want to share. They are also used as an opportunity to help children learn important life skills. For example, a first-aid instructor was invited to attend one of the meetings. Other discussions have included education around substance misuse. This is helping the children to learn about safety and acquire essential skills.

The staff are proactive in responding to changes in the child's behaviour. For example, they ensure that the child's access to their finances is overseen when there may be a concern about how their money is being spent. When a consequence is linked to the child's behaviour, the manager ensures that they review this and its effectiveness.

There are comprehensive care and risk plans in place to guide staff on how to support the child. These are updated by staff when new risks emerge or there are changes to the child's care planning. This ensures that the child receives good-quality care from informed staff.

New processes have been introduced to ensure that staff are safely recruited, and this extends to agency staff. Therefore, only staff who have been fully vetted work with the children.

Some children have frequently been missing from home. However, staff are proactive in their efforts to communicate with the children and find them to ensure their safety and well-being. When concerns or risks have heightened for children, senior leaders have escalated their concerns appropriately to seek intervention and support from the child's local authority team and external professionals.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The registered manager has ensured that there are effective monitoring and oversight systems. This is supported by regular audits carried out by the quality assurance lead person. The registered manager has plans in place for the staff's continued development and refurbishment of the home.

Staff feel they have worked together as a team through what has been a testing time for them, supporting children with often complex and high needs. The staff feel better supported with the changes in management and the addition of two assistant managers to support the registered manager. Staff now receive regular supervision and time to reflect.

Feedback from external professionals is mixed. This is reflective of the turbulent times the staff and children have faced. A social worker complimented the staff on the joined-up working and care for one child's move from the home. However, another social worker feels that staff needed to be more proactive in working together to enhance the experiences for the child living in the home and provide more challenge and engagement.

There has been an investment in staff's learning and development to ensure that all staff have the required training, skills and support for their role. This has included additional workshops for staff around alcohol and substance misuse so that they may provide support to children with these issues should they arise. All staff have had their annual appraisals when due.

## 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, The 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, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>seek to involve each child’s placing authority effectively in the child’s care, in accordance with the child’s relevant plans;</p> <p>seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child’s needs. (Regulation 5 (a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, staff must work with the child’s local authority to ensure that the child’s needs are met in partnership.</p>	<p>30 November 2024</p>

### Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff take reasonable precautions and make informed professional judgements based on the individual child’s needs and developmental stage about when to allow a child to take a particular risk or follow a particular course of action. If a child makes a choice that would place them at risk of harm, staff should assist them to understand the risks and manage their risk-taking behaviour to keep themselves and others safe. This specifically relates to online risks for the child and ensuring that these interactions have oversight from staff. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 42, paragraph 9.7)

### 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:** SC037454

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

**Registered provider address:** West Sussex County Council, Democratic Services, County Hall, West Street, Chichester PO19 1RQ

**Responsible individual:** Hayley Grover

**Registered manager:** Zoe Willis

## Inspector

Sara Stoker, Social Care Inspector

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