

SC399222

Registered provider:

Full inspection West Sussex County Council

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides short-term emergency support for children at times of crisis or significant periods of change in their lives. The home provides care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2024.

Three children were living in the home at the time of the inspection

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 May 2025

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: 16 July 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/07/2024	Full	Good
18/09/2023	Full	Good
24/08/2017	Full	Good
09/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Warm, nurturing and committed staff care for the children and build positive relationships with them. The staff are able to build relationships quickly with the children, even though the children know they are only living in the home for a short period of time. One child has recently returned to the home and thinks it's better this time.

Children can freely spend time with family. Staff help children to maintain positive relationships with their family members, and the children's relatives spend time in the home. One child's grandmother and another's sibling visit the home to spend quality time together. One child's parent described feeling very supported by the staff and that they [the staff] go 'above and beyond', particularly with helping them to spend time as a family.

Staff help the children to engage with education. Due to the children spending short periods of time in the home, the focus of the staff support is helping to reduce risks for the children and explore their emotions. One child has successfully re-entered education after having a prolonged time away from school.

Staff help the children to develop their independence skills. This has been particularly successful for one child, who has moved on since the last inspection. Children have developed a range of independent living skills and have clear plans to help them to continue to learn when they leave. The staff involve the children in completing household tasks such as cleaning and gardening.

The children often move in at short notice. The manager completes detailed assessments to ensure that they understand children's needs before they move in. For one child, it became apparent that their needs were more complex than anticipated and staff have worked hard to reduce the impact on the other children. This has not always been effective in keeping children in the home in line with their care plans. One child is currently being cared for away from the home while a new home is found for them.

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

Staff understand the vulnerabilities of the children and develop clear safety plans. These are captured in detailed assessments. However, a new risk for one child was not shared with the child's social worker and this potentially limits the effectiveness of the professional network to inform safety plans. In practice, this has not negatively affected the child's safety and well-being.

Some children have been missing from home. The risks of this have reduced for the children over time. Staff promptly inform the relevant safeguarding partners and keep clear records of actions taken. On one occasion, the children were able to leave the

home overnight undetected by staff, which left the children at risk of harm. Leaders have investigated and practice has been changed to reduce the risks of this happening again.

Leaders manage allegations well. They work well with the local authority designated officer and, if the staff are employed by an external agency, they share concerns with their employers.

Staff take a positive approach to managing behaviours. They remind the children of social rules and expectations. They approach situations calmly and positively to help the children settle and move on with their routines for the day. Care practice is underpinned by clearly recorded, child-focused care plans.

The children have complex needs. Staff engage with a range of specialist services to help provide care for the children. Although staff consult with psychologists regularly, this input does not consistently inform the plans of care for the children. Some of the discussions and reflections in these sessions have not changed staff practice or care for the children.

Staff generally know how to safely administer medications and there are effective systems in place to identify when errors have occurred. This enables managers to take prompt action to address any practice concerns. However, on two occasions medication errors have not been reported to managers promptly. In practice this has had no effect on the safety and well-being of the children and leaders took steps to learn lessons and improve practice.

Physical intervention is rarely used by staff. The use of these interventions is well recorded with clear management scrutiny. Staff speak to the children following incidents to check on their well-being. They ensure that the children receive medical attention if this is required.

Leaders have identified gaps in how they record recruitment checks. They have since put in place clear auditing practices to ensure that they have all the recruitment checks before staff start their employment. This ensures that suitable staff care for the children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by a permanent suitably qualified and experienced manager. The manager has a child-focused approach and is involved in the children's care. He has fostered a learning culture amongst staff and, as a result, is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home.

The manager is supported by a responsible individual, who is present in the home and has positive relationships with the children. She works effectively alongside the manager to ensure good standards of care.

Staff receive regular and good-quality supervision. They say they are listened to by managers and there is a culture of open and honest discussion. The manager has arranged for additional support to promote staff welfare. Staff welfare is discussed in supervision, and safeguarding topics are regularly explored with the staff to keep their knowledge up to date.

Staff work well with the children's families. One parent said, 'They have made our lives very easy.' The parent described how staff communicate with and consult effectively with them. This has supported their child to maintain regular time with their sibling, and for their family to remain involved in the child's care planning. Another relative said that they [staff] always do the best for their child.

Professionals report close working with staff. The staff attend regular network meetings and provide updates about the children's needs. Staff advocate effectively for the children and challenge the local authority if necessary to ensure that children get the right help and support. Professionals say they have a close working relationship with the manager and feel that information is shared with them promptly.

The children are cared for by a stable and committed staff team. Staff are highly invested in the children and prioritise keeping them safe. Staff support each other and the morale is high. Staff are well trained to carry out their roles, and the manager has improved oversight of training for staff to ensure they have regular updates.

The statement of purpose does not reflect the service provided by the staff. The staff do provide good, nurturing care, but do not provide therapeutic input to the children as described in the statement of purpose.

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>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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a))</p> <p>In particular, the registered manager must ensure that the home’s statement of purpose accurately reflects the therapeutic care that children should expect to receive.</p> <p>In particular, senior leaders within the organisation must ensure that the home is used for its intended purpose and that the children move on from the home in line with their care planning.</p>	19 June 2025
<p>The health and well-being standard is that—</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>understand the child’s health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child’s health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child’s age and understanding;</p> <p>understand and develop skills to promote the child’s well-being.</p>	19 June 2025

(Regulation 10 (1) (2)(a)(ii)(iv))

In particular, the registered manager must ensure that the guidance provided by the organisation's psychologists forms the basis of the children's plans and care.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff agree with the placing authority the next steps the home will take when managing assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards' page 42, paragraph 9.5)

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: SC399222

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: West Sussex County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 1RG

Responsible individual: Hayley Grover

Registered manager: Theodore Barclay

Inspectors

Mark Dawkins, Social Care Inspector
Sophie Carter, Social Care Inspector

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