

SC040631

Registered provider: Surrey County Council

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and run by a local authority. The staff care for up to four children who have experienced childhood trauma and have complex difficulties relating to their social and emotional well-being. Four children currently live at the home.

The manager has been in post since September 2022 and is in the process of submitting her application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 28 March 2023

Date of last inspection: 9 November 2022

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The care of children

Three children were present during the inspection. Children are, overall, settled and nurtured in the home environment. They benefit from strong and trusting relationships with staff who know them well.

There have been steady practice improvements in the home since the previous inspection. This has positively impacted on children's overall quality and experiences of care.

Children enjoy a variety of activities available to them and actively participate in them alongside staff. They talk positively of their experiences with staff and look forward to their next activity.

Managers and leaders advocate on behalf of children to ensure that they have options available to them relevant to their interests and hobbies. As a result, children regularly attend the gym and horse-riding lessons. This helps children to enjoy new activities and build relationships.

Staff promote contact between children and those important to them. Staff also build relationships with the network around the child. This ensures consistency in messages and clear communication with children. This collaborative approach also reduces risks to children, especially when they go missing.

Children's views have become more evident. This is most notable in their care and placement plans. An example of staff practice changing due to a child's feedback was also seen. Responses from children, staff and family members also attest to the child's voice being present. The previous recommendation has therefore been met.

The safety of children

Staff understand the individualised risks to the children in their care. Risk assessments are detailed and updated regularly. Children trust staff and will ask for support when feeling vulnerable. Staff actively implement strategies to reduce the risk of harm to children. This keeps children safe.

Staff's response to children's behaviour has improved. When there are concerns, staff take effective action. There have been no unplanned endings or admissions. The police presence in the home has continued to be significantly reduced. Staff confidence has improved in their approach to keeping children safe.

Safeguarding incident reports are detailed and thorough. Managers reject incident reports if they do not include enough relevant information. This promotes good practice in ensuring accuracy in reporting.

No one spoken to voice any safeguarding concerns around practice during this inspection.

Progress has been made in relation to the shortfalls raised at the last inspection under the protection of children standard. However, it was not possible to test these fully. The requirement will remain, and it will be explored at the next inspection.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

The manager has been in post since September 2022. Since the previous inspection, she has submitted her application to register. Two experienced deputy managers and a relatively new staff team support the manager. Sufficiency within the team has improved. Staff report that the manager is supportive and communicative. This provides a positive environment for children to live in.

Leaders and managers continue to work well with external professionals and family members. All comments received report good communication and positive working relationships.

Recording on children's files is thorough and detailed. Management oversight is evident but has been consistently delayed. The manager acknowledges this is an area for improvement. The manager has recently embedded an audit tool to track oversight. This is in addition to the current recording system in place. It is still too soon to assess whether this will result in sustained change.

Notifications of safeguarding incidents are now consistently being sent to Ofsted. Delay is minimal. This has allowed for the regulator to review the manager's safeguarding actions. The previous requirement is therefore met.

Leaders and staff strive to improve the presentation of the home to make it feel less institutionalised. Improvements can be seen in the kitchen and living areas. Bathrooms have been painted and personalised. However, work to replace the flooring in bathrooms has not been completed. The previous requirement has been replaced with a recommendation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/11/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
25/05/2021	Full	Good
28/11/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/07/2018	Full	Good

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 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>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>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies; and</p> <p>that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(iv)(v)(vii)(b))</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p>	<p>15 May 2023</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>15 May 2023</p>

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1) (2)(h))

This relates specifically to the registered person's progress on timely oversight of incidents.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children and is a homely, domestic environment. The children's home must comply with relevant health and safety legislations; however, in doing so, the home should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. This relates specifically to the registered person making progress on the home's development plan for refurbishment of areas in the home that need improvement, including the bathrooms. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC040631

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Surrey County Council

Registered provider address: Quadrant Court, 35 Guildford Road, Woking, Surrey GU22 7QQ

Responsible individual: Paul Thomas

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Skye Frain, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
M1 2WD

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