

SC032439

Registered provider: Wiltshire Council

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to provide a short-break service for up to seven children. Some children may have physical disabilities, learning disabilities and/or sensory impairment. The local authority operates the home.

The registered manager has been in post since August 2020 and registered with Ofsted in December 2020.

Inspection date: 14 February 2023

Date of last inspection: 13 June 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

Staff continue to enjoy working with the children who visit this home. There is a shared ethos among staff that the home should be a place of familiarity and comfort for the children, much like visiting the home of a relative.

Staff report that morale in the home is much improved and this continues to have a positive impact on children's experiences. Staff have welcomed changes to the way children's stays are planned to allow for friendships to form, and better planning of activities to suit the needs and interests of the children. Children have more opportunities as a result.

Activities are arranged as a direct result of children's requests. Trips and activities are well recorded in a child-friendly format on an online platform which allows staff to upload photos and videos of children to a secure site to share with their parents in real time. Parents can also respond on the platform, ask questions or quickly clarify any information. This has been well received by parents.

Technology is being further explored as a way of capturing children's wishes and feelings so they can contribute to their records. This is still in its infancy at present. Leaders and managers hope that this will better enable children to provide feedback on the service they receive.

The safety of children

Safeguarding has been well prioritised, and a number of changes have been implemented to ensure practice is more robust. Body maps are recorded effectively and each month the manager records their oversight, identifies themes and takes necessary actions.

Safeguarding files are thorough in their recording and it is clear what action has been taken and the rationale for the decisions reached. Leaders and managers routinely liaise with social work colleagues to inform themselves of the outcome of a referral and have challenged some decisions when appropriate. However, there is one safeguarding file which is recorded as closed, yet an action plan is still awaited from the child's social worker.

There are further changes planned to the recording of children's information and how this is stored, with a move to an electronic database. While records have significantly improved there are still some inconsistencies in recording and gaps where oversight could be strengthened. The format of the new electronic system is

anticipated to correct this and allow staff to have a clear overview of the child's lived experiences.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

Leaders and managers have addressed the shortfalls identified at the previous inspection. They are ambitious to take the service forward and feel confident in the strength and knowledge of their staff team to do this effectively.

Staff report feeling well supported by the managers and supervision processes. They can access relevant training to suit their specific role. However, while oversight of staff training has improved, there remain some gaps in corporate training requirements that need to be addressed.

Concerns raised about staff practice are responded to in a thorough and timely manner to further protect children. Investigations into staff practices are taken seriously and well recorded. Children's safety is at the forefront of all decision-making.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/06/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
22/02/2022	Full	Inadequate
28/10/2019	Full	Good
02/01/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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 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 each child’s relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that children’s records are consistent and contain information that is relevant to the individual child and their care. Also, ensure that records are accurately updated and provide staff with a good oversight of the child’s needs and experiences.</p>	<p>1 June 2023</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. When there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff remain up to date with their training and development. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 53, paragraph 10.11)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC032439

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Wiltshire Council

Registered provider address: Director of Social Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 8LE

Responsible individual: Lucy Townsend

Registered manager: Kevin Derby

Inspector

Katie Ratcliffe, Social Care Inspector

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