

1226757

Registered provider: Potton Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private company runs this children's home alongside two other children's homes and a school. This home is registered to care for up to three children who have learning disabilities.

The suitably experienced registered manager has been registered since July 2019.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 September 2019

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 requires improvement to be good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 15 January 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/01/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
04/06/2018	Full	Good
15/05/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
02/12/2016	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 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 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)(b))</p>	15/11/2019
<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>demonstrate that practice at 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. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(g)(i)(ii))</p>	15/11/2019
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>undertake appropriate continuing professional development;</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and</p>	15/11/2019

have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33(4)(a)(b))	
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Recommendations

- Ensure that the review of the suitability of the home's location includes the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and the strategies for managing these. Providers should refer to the non-statutory advice about the location assessment process: 'Children's homes regulation amendments 2014: Advice for children's homes providers on new duties under regulation that came into effect in January and April 2014'. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

No children were living at the home at the time of the inspection. The last child moved out three days before this inspection.

Since his arrival, the new manager has acted purposefully and introduced several positive changes. The changes are directly beneficial to the children. For example, the small sensory garden helps children to interact with their environment more confidently. Visual prompts and individualised goals help to ensure consistency, structure and routine for every child.

Staff build good relationships with children and make a significant effort to get to know each child's needs and personality. Individual children often experience thoughtful and carefully managed transitions into and out of the home. This helps some children to be positively prepared for their next move.

Children attend health appointments. All children learn to participate more willingly in daily routines, and this helps them to improve their self-care skills and personal hygiene. Some children improve their ability to use public transport, which helps to improve their access to local resources and leisure facilities. Children can have fun, be part of the local community and experience inclusion.

Every child receives significant help with maintaining and building relationships with their family and those who are important to them. This ensures that children see their families and those who are important to them more often. Families who were consulted during this inspection have confidence in the care and support offered to their children. Every child's family is welcomed to the home. Families recognise that individual staff go above and beyond to understand their children's abilities and unique characters.

Some children have personal advocates. Communication with other agencies is good. Overall, relationships with other agencies are positive. The new manager is a strong advocate for children and consistently ensures that other professionals are aware of their responsibility to work in partnership to ensure that children have good experiences and make progress.

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

Children do not go missing from this home. The frequency of physical intervention has reduced. This has coincided with the reduction in the number of children living at the home.

By spending time with the children, staff shape their understanding of each child's motivators and preferences for self-expression. This helps the staff to assess the likely risks arising from individual diagnoses and known behaviours.

The staff monitor the children's use of the internet. The staff do what they can to reduce the likelihood of children and others coming to any harm. For example, by building good relationships with the children, some staff have become very good at recognising children's triggers. This helps some of the staff to intervene more positively to manage the behaviours that some adults find difficult to manage.

The number of incidents at the home and in the local community have reduced significantly. Some children are unpredictable and lash out physically towards others, but, nonetheless, most staff consistently show patience and understanding towards those children.

Any concerns about staff conduct, behaviours or practices are referred to the designated officer within appropriate time frames. The managers and leaders investigate concerns and take suitable action to address shortfalls in staff practice. This helps to keep vulnerable children safe from harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager is effective in providing staff with a structure to follow. He came into post in May 2019, at a time when incidents at the home had been demanding and staff were, on occasions, struggling to manage some of the children's highly complex and challenging needs.

Some children need to be looked after by two staff, which meant an increase in the number of staff at the home at any one time. These arrangements coincided with an increase in the number of agency staff on shift. In recent weeks, the use of agency staff has reduced significantly. Some staff have left, but new staff have been recruited. Some of the new staff have previous experience relevant to working with learning disabilities. This helps to ensure that children's needs are understood.

Permanent staff receive a thorough induction. This includes having the opportunity to shadow more experienced colleagues on shift. Leaders expect staff to access several training courses. There are lots of courses available and many are online. However, the training available to staff does not have the range and depth needed to prepare them all for working with children who have highly complex autism spectrum disorders. This does not ensure that the whole workforce is sufficiently informed by research and developments in practice.

In recent months, the staff team's meetings have become more purposeful and focused. As a result, clear plans of action for improving the home's day-to-day running have been agreed. However, delivery of some staff supervisions and annual appraisals has been inconsistent. This does not ensure that every member of staff receives consistent and dependable advice and guidance.

The new manager recognises when children require more specialised support. The position, size and location of this home are such that each placement requires careful consideration to assess everyone's suitability for group living in a small setting. This approach has been inconsistently applied, resulting in staff being hurt and an increase in complaints from neighbours. In addition, there is no evidence to show that lessons have been learned from the neighbours' complaints. Leaders do not consistently demonstrate enough understanding of the group dynamics when placing and matching children who have highly complex health and social care needs.

The responsible individual, who is the founder owner, was present for this inspection. She recognises that the home has been through a period of change.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: 1226757

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Potton Homes Limited

Registered provider address: Potton Homes, 1 Cresswell Park, Blackheath, London SE3 9RD

Responsible individual: Susan Potton

Registered manager: Peter Dyer-Davies

Inspectors

Rosie Davie: social care inspector

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