

SC469396

Registered provider: Acorn Homes (UK) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to four children aged up to 18 years old, who may have social emotional and mental health difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since November 2021.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 27 January 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 February 2022

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: 23 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 23/01/2020 | Interim | Sustained effectiveness |
| 01/10/2019 | Full | Good |
| 17/10/2018 | Full | Requires improvement to be good |
| 09/08/2017 | Full | Good |

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from positive relationships with the staff. These relationships provide a safe and open environment for the children to experience care from staff who are attentive and familiar with the children's needs. For example, one child said, 'The staff are amazing, I wouldn't want to be anywhere else.' Staff provide meaningful opportunities for the children to have normal childhood experiences that build their confidence. Examples of these opportunities include joining the local football club, equine therapy and swimming lessons.

Children have regular meetings with their key workers to talk about topics that are important to them. This includes discussions about how recent incidents could be having an impact on how they feel, and the support that they may need. For one child, this has led to progress in his engagement with other health professionals to provide support with his emotional well-being. This has resulted in a joined-up approach to ensure the best outcomes for this child's mental health.

The children's education attainment is strong and is the product of the high levels of support provided by staff. When children are not attending mainstream education, there is an education plan in place for each child. One child, who previously did not attend any formal education for over a year, has just started school. Staff ensured that this child was well prepared through regular key-work sessions, had a smart new haircut and freshly purchased uniform.

Most children are supported to move on from the home in a planned way. The registered manager and staff place considerable emphasis on moves for children being well thought out, to provide the best chance for success. One child remained in this home until after his agreed leaving date to allow for the best possible specialist service to be secured. Such practice demonstrates the provider's commitment and care about making children's moves as seamless as possible.

The feedback from involved professionals is complimentary about the quality and impact of the care provided for the children. In one example, a child's social worker said that the child 'has done exceptionally well and thrived in certain areas'.

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

The response by staff for children who are at risk of, and who do go, missing from home is well planned. Staff actively look for the children and rigorously attempt to contact them to find out where they are and encourage them to return. When children do return, key-working discussions are used to explore the child's reasons for going missing. Staff strive to be supportive in their attempts to help the children to think about what they can do differently the next time they think about going missing.

The staff are very attentive to the children's changing emotions, and their approach to the children reflects this. For example, one child who uses self-harm as a coping mechanism during periods of emotional distress has built strong relationships with trusted staff, and now asks for reassurance and support when having these feelings. Furthermore, the provider's health and well-being team provides practical guides for staff as well as a therapeutic safety plan for this child. This joined-up approach is supporting this child to start to make positive changes, reducing their need to self-harm.

Bullying between the children rarely happens in the home. The staff's educative approach teaches the children about the cause and effect that this can have on emotional well-being. A recent poster competition during national bullying week was well received by the children, with the winner receiving a prize. This proactive approach to bullying prevention and education has encouraged peer relationships in the home to flourish.

Physical intervention is seldom used in this home. This is because the staff are well informed on each child's needs and use their skills and experience to provide a calming atmosphere and approach. The provider has recently changed the written documentation to ensure that it meets the requirements for recording, and gives prompts to the staff to ensure sufficient information is recorded. This change means that previous omissions in staff's recording have been addressed.

Managers ensure that any allegations against staff are communicated to the relevant external safeguarding agencies, and they follow the advice given. However, one example of following this advice, by conducting an internal investigation of a staff member, does not demonstrate that every aspect of the staff member's poor practice was addressed. This omission means that similar mistakes could be repeated.

The location risk assessment for the home is regularly reviewed. However, the registered manager has not updated changes to risk mitigation included in the document, or considered consultation with relevant persons during recent annual reviews. Consequently, changing or emerging risks may not have been considered.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The staff team benefits from regular, good-quality supervision. Staff reflect positively on the quality of training and how this supports their ongoing development. Staff who are keen to progress feel that there are opportunities for in-house career progression, and they have plans in place to support this. The registered manager feels well supported by the senior leadership that surrounds him. This ensures that standards are maintained to support the delivery of high-quality care for the children.

Some staff turnover has occurred since the last inspection. However, the registered manager has carefully selected new staff members to add to the experience in the

team. The staff all share the company's ethos and values and promote these through the way they care for the children.

The registered manager has established systems for the oversight of the children's key documents and tasks relating to the home. However, this is not always effective. For example, some of the actions raised by the provider's recent health and safety audit of the home have not been addressed. These examples do not pose immediate risks to the children's safety. However, the failure of the registered manager to monitor that all identified actions are completed undermines the intended impact of the provider's auditing.

The statement of purpose is not fully accurate. For example, a new responsible individual has been in post since November 2021 and this significant change has not been updated.

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 registered person must compile in relation to the children’s home a statement (“the statement of purpose”) which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1.</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it. (Regulation 16 (1)(3)(a))</p> | <p>28 February 2022</p> |

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the actions arising from internal audits are effectively monitored to ensure their timely completion. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations, including the quality standards’, page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- Review of premises- Under regulation 46, the registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these and when conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations, including the quality standards’, page 64, paragraph 15.1)

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: SC469396

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Acorn Homes (UK) Limited

Registered provider address: Unit 73-74, Maple Leaf Business Park, Manston, Ramsgate CT12 5GD

Responsible individual: Keith Riley

Registered manager: Benjamin Blackwell

Inspector

Sara Stoker, Social Care Inspector

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