

# 1258831

Registered provider: Arc HD Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children with emotional, behavioural and/or mental health needs. The accommodation is set in three individual living areas, with shared communal space.

The home has been without a registered manager since 5 February 2019.

**Inspection dates:** 4 to 5 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:** 18 February 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** sustained effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| <b>Inspection date</b> | <b>Inspection type</b> | <b>Inspection judgement</b>     |
|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 18/02/2019             | Interim                | Sustained effectiveness         |
| 04/09/2018             | Full                   | Good                            |
| 23/01/2018             | Full                   | Requires improvement to be good |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children make strong, consistent progress while living in the home. They enjoy warm and nurturing relationships with staff, who hold children and their views central to all aspects of the home. Children's voice is evident throughout their care and safety plans, including their ideas on how best they can be supported and the goals they would like to achieve. Children are highly complimentary about the home and staff. Observations showed that children are confident in their interaction with staff and are made to feel comfortable in their home and surroundings. Daily visits to a child who is dual-placed demonstrate the commitment to maintaining relationships with children and acting in their best interests. Children are helped to explore their family histories and previous experiences to help them to understand their stories and enable them to move forwards in a positive way. Social workers are consistently positive about staff commitment to children.

All the children in the home have experienced severe disruption in their education. The staff work closely with the virtual school to ensure that appropriate education is sought as a matter of urgency. While waiting for placements for the children, staff support them to be ready for education through set routines, the use of tutors and positive activities.

Children develop independent skills in line with their age and ability. Younger children learn to keep their personal space tidy and to prepare simple meals. This includes making healthy choices for snacks. The use of individual flats provides children with the ability to spend time away from others in the home, in a safe space with an allocated member of staff. This results in a calmer environment in which children can choose when to spend time in communal areas, without feeling that their bedroom is the only other place they can be.

Children's emotional and physical health is central to plans. Staff have excellent links with the organisation's therapeutic team and external agencies that provide emotional and physical health services for children, ensuring consistency in approach and support. Children share their home with chickens, rabbits and a hamster, and they said that they love having the animals around. Staff commented on the calming effect on children. Children learn about healthy lifestyles and consider what this means for them. Children are encouraged to be physically active and engage in emotionally stimulating activities. The garden includes an extensive vegetable patch that the children have helped to cultivate, including growing excellent pumpkins. Medication is stored securely, and processes have been strengthened in response to some medication administration and reordering errors.

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

Children are confident in approaching staff and can name those they would go to if they were worried or upset. The way children present and interact with staff shows that they

feel safe in their home. Staff have sound knowledge of each child's needs and vulnerabilities. They can demonstrate their knowledge of how they would respond to any worries or concerns about a child's welfare. They have interpreted their training in relation to all forms of exploitation in their daily practice, including supporting children to be safe online and recognising unhealthy relationships.

The home is furnished and designed in a manner that allows young people as much freedom as possible, while recognising that their histories and diagnoses may lead to suicidal feelings and self-injury. Staff work well with partner agencies when transitioning children to the home from secure residential settings, including seeking their views on what household items are safe for the child to use. Plans for managing self-injury are clear and devised with input from the child and relevant professionals. Regular training for staff from therapeutic practitioners ensures that staff are skilled in managing self-injury and other emotional well-being and mental health needs. Staff have the opportunity to reflect on how children's actions and presentation affect them as carers. The plan for checking the house and grounds for sharp items is not consistently embedded in practice. Checks are not happening early enough in the day, and the inspector found a broken pen on the driveway on arrival. This was not an immediate risk for those in the home at the time of the inspection, but might be for others who are placed.

Children's safety and support plans are reflective, including the child's views on why they may act in socially unacceptable ways. Plans allow for children to explain the emotions they can understand, to enable staff to respond effectively. Staff recognise all behaviour as children trying to communicate with them and with each other, and they work with children to redirect their negative emotions into more acceptable responses. These include exercise, arts and crafts or talking. Children have space to work through their emotions in a way that does not have an impact on the others, through the use of their individual living spaces. Physical intervention is rarely used, and children and staff have the space to reflect openly about what happened, when this has been required.

Children rarely go missing from the home. Plans for the way in which staff should respond are clear, although some key information differs from that in other plans held in the home. The high staffing ratio enables children to have access to staff at all times. Staff are knowledgeable about children's cues and will generally intervene to support the child prior their actively leaving the home. Staff remain with the child, discussing their anxieties and exploring how they can be redirected or reduced.

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

The home has been without a registered manager since February 2019. The interim arrangements are acceptable, with the registered manager from another home within the organisation being present in the home for the majority of his working time. The lack of a permanent manager has not had a negative impact on the children's experiences. The acting manager is in the process of submitting his registration application to Ofsted.

The acting manager has clear plans for the way that he would like children's care and experiences in the home to improve. The changes in independent visiting arrangements since the last inspection have led to better external oversight and challenge. These arrangements complement well the manager's monthly monitoring and six-monthly evaluations. Both are used to identify areas for improvement. Visits from other managers within the service and from the advocate provide a helpful level of oversight and scrutiny.

Staff said that they have 'never been so well supported'. They feel that they are well trained and really benefit from the insight they gain from the monthly sessions with therapeutic professionals. There have been some delays in accessing a suitable level 3 qualification, due to issues with the local training provider. This has now been addressed, and staff are beginning to re-engage in the learning process.

The management team has good oversight of children's progress. Plans are reviewed and updated quarterly, reviewing children's progress against their agreed targets. All staff have input into the monitoring process, allowing for the smallest improvements to be recognised and celebrated. Children are engaged in the process of setting their own targets, in addition to those set at their statutory reviews. Some records and plans contain similar information, and not all plans are updated with the same information or at the same time. This was noted as a shortfall at the full inspection in 2018.

Staff have formed strong working relationships with partner agencies to ensure consistent care for children. A particular strength is joint working with mental health services to ensure that children have the best possible support and transition to community living. Managers actively challenge partner agencies when they feel that they are not acting in the best interests of children. They are genuinely committed to all children in their care having the best possible chance of progressing and developing.

Staff and managers have worked hard since the last inspection to reduce some of the institutional features of the home, while ensuring that children are able to access their independent living spaces without constant supervision. Managers have given great consideration to how toilet seats can be attached to the safety toilets and have changed door handles to standard fixtures in communal areas. Children's bedrooms are individualised to their tastes, and the use of anti-ligature fixtures and fittings is not prominent. The home has benefited from a recent redecoration and is now brighter in appearance.

## 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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that—<br/>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and<br/>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—<br/>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home.<br/>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(f))</p> | <p>18/10/2019</p> |

### Recommendations

- Children must feel safe and be safe. Staff should support children to be aware of and manage their own safety both inside and outside the home to the extent that any good parent would. Staff should help children to understand how to protect themselves, feel protected and be protected from significant harm. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 43, para 9.9)  
In particular, managers must ensure that staff follow processes in the home to protect children from harm.

## **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:** 1258831

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Arc HD Services Ltd

**Registered provider address:** Arc HD Services, Wessex House, Upper Market Street, Eastleigh SO50 9FD

**Responsible individual:** Martin Rose

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Jennie Christopher, social care inspector



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