

# 2641682

Registered provider: Institute of Integrated Systemic Therapy

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a charitable organisation. It is registered to provide care and support for up to four children who may have social and emotional difficulties. There were four children living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The home and manager registered with Ofsted in August 2021.

### Inspection dates: 5 and 6 March 2024

**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:** 7 February 2023

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/02/2023	Full	Good
15/03/2022	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

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

The children are well matched and have successfully lived as a group together for nearly two years. They benefit from a stable staff team that provides high levels of nurturing, consistency and emotional security. The staff take the time to get to know the children, their personalities and interests. The children are cared for by non-judgemental staff who support them to develop as individuals. The children receive highly personalised care which partner professionals describe as 'brilliant'. One child's social worker said that staff were 'really attuned' to their child's particular needs.

The children are thriving as a result of the high-quality care that they receive. The children, staff and partner professionals are proud of the significant personal progress that the children have made. One child is described as 'almost unrecognisable' in their personal presentation, having grown in confidence and self-esteem from the point at which they moved into the home.

The staff have worked closely with educational partners to ensure that the children have educational arrangements which meet their individual needs. The staff's efforts have helped some children who previously refused school to re-engage and discover the joy of learning. One child changed from someone who had missed much education and refused to go to school, to a keen reader who passed their English GCSE. Most children completed school with their peers and enjoyed getting dressed up and celebrating at the school prom. The staff also held a prom-type celebration event so that the children in alternative education who did not have a school prom, did not miss out on this rite of passage.

The children have lots of opportunities to try new things. The staff encourage children to pursue their passions and interests. One child is enjoying horse riding lessons and is excited to be caring for a pony. Another has taken up ice skating and is now a talented figure skater. A further child enjoys building and repairing things. They have their own shed and tools. The staff have supported them to study construction skills at college. This attention to the children's talents and interests has given children confidence in their abilities and aspiration for their futures.

The staff provide the children with a high level of emotional support. The therapeutic model of care is fully embedded in to staff practice. The staff help the children to understand healthy choices and seek specialist support for them when needed. Despite the staff support and guidance, the children sometimes do make unhealthy choices, such as smoking or vaping. Vaping is not allowed. However, the children's guide does not clearly tell children that vaping is prohibited at the home.

The staff informally help children to develop independence skills. However, there is not an effective and well implemented approach to helping children to develop the practical skills needed and to prepare them for life after this home. This is

particularly relevant as the children are all aged 16 or over and will move on to supported or independent living accommodation in the next year or two.

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

The staff build close, supportive relationships with the children, helping them to feel settled and safe. Partner professionals describe staff as people who deeply care about the children. The children describe the staff as trusted and safe adults. They feel confident to talk openly to staff about the issues which matter to them, knowing that they will receive sensitive, non-judgemental support. They have particular staff whom they will seek out when they want to talk about their worries or need a hug.

The supportive relationships between the children and the staff underpin children's emotional stability, resilience and the positive behaviour that they display. This has had a constructive effect on the children's safety and well-being, and risky behaviours have significantly reduced.

The staff help children manage their anxieties and give them the tools to cope with situations. There have been no physical restraints of children in the past year. Significant incidents are very rare. When significant incidents have occurred, staff have managed these effectively and with sensitivity.

The staff have a good understanding of the risks faced by the individual children and what may trigger incidents such as self-harm. However, some children's individual risk assessments and support plans do not reflect the current reduced levels of risk in areas such as self-harm.

The children rarely go missing. However, when they do, the staff act quickly to ensure their safe return. The staff seek to understand why children act in the way that they do so that they can help to keep them safe.

The children have a high sense of ownership of their comfortable home. They have enjoyed decorating their bedrooms according to their personal tastes. The house is generally a well-maintained safe, nurturing and supportive environment. However, an open shed in the garden has not been risk assessed. This shed contains various pieces of wood, paints and other materials that have the potential to pose a risk to children.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The registered manager has qualifications in therapeutic practice and is currently undertaking a suitable management qualification. He is highly available to the staff and children. The children enjoy spending time with him. He understands what matters most to the children and ensures that the staff understand the home's therapeutic model of care.

The staff enjoy working at the home and feel proud of the difference that they make. They describe wrap around support which builds and maintains their resilience. Staff feel valued, challenged and respected by supportive managers.

The staff are caring and they ensure that children's voices are heard. They consistently take the time to seek out children's priorities and preferences. The staff talk warmly about the children and how proud they are of them.

The manager develops and maintains close relationships with partner professionals to ensure that children's needs are well met. Consequently, the manager and staff are highly valued by partner professionals. One said, 'I can't say good enough things about them.'

New staff benefit from good-quality induction and training. Training includes a variety of relevant e-learning courses supplemented by some face-to-face training. Senior leaders provide staff with good quality therapeutic training which enhances their practice. Staff have opportunities to pursue higher level qualifications and they value the commitment to their personal development.

The monthly reports from the independent visitor focus on the maintenance of records. There is lack of evaluation of what the home is doing well and what could be improved. The reports of the visits do not help to challenge staff to continually develop and celebrate what they do well.

The children's records are currently held in a combination of paper and electronic systems. Staff find these difficult to navigate. The records do not evidence the level of support to children that staff describe. One child's local authority care plan was not accessible as it was locked in a staff drawer. Staff supervision records do not consistently demonstrate the high quality reflective supervision that staff describe receiving.

The manager has a good understanding of the service, its strengths and areas for development. This knowledge successfully drives improvement. The manager has ensured that all requirements, and the majority of recommendations set at the last inspection have been met. The home has been open for two years. There has been minimal changes to the staff group and only one child has moved on in this period. This consistency has provided stability and security for both the children and the staff. This provides a strong foundation for this relatively new home to grow.

## What does the children's home need to do to improve?

### Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure the children's home complies with relevant health and safety legislation. The registered person should ensure the unsecured garden shed is risk assessed and any risks identified are appropriately managed. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff help each child to prepare for any moves from the home, whether they are returning home, moving to another placement or adult care, or to live independently. This includes supporting the child to develop emotional and mental resilience to cope without the home's support and, where the child is moving to live independently, practical skills such as cooking, housework, budgeting and personal self-care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27)
- The registered person should ensure that the children's guide helps children to understand what the day to day routines and rules, including vaping, of the home are. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.22)
- The registered person should ensure that placement plans and any changes to how the staff should respond to day-to-day risks are updated in written risk assessments. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure effective independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of independent monitoring systems (including under regulation 44) to ensure continuous improvement. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should ensure that there is a record of supervision kept for staff. The record should provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with paragraph 13.2 and allows staff to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)
- The registered person should ensure that the home's information storage and record keeping systems are effective and evidence the level of support provided to the children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

### 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:** 2641682

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

**Registered provider:** Institute of Integrated Systemic Therapy

**Registered provider address:** Institute of Integrated Systemic Therapy, 210  
Borough High Street, London SE1 1JX

**Responsible individual:** Gary Yexley

**Registered manager:** Henry Lukens

## Inspector

Joanna Heller, Social Care Inspector

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