

SC065792

Registered provider: Institute of Integrated Systemic Therapy

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a charitable organisation. The home specialises in the treatment of up to eight children who present with severe emotional and behavioural problems as a result of attachment difficulties that are usually rooted in early-life trauma.

The registered manager has been in post since 26 November 2015.

Inspection dates: 14 to 15 October 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 9 January 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/01/2019	Full	Outstanding
28/11/2017	Full	Outstanding
31/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12/09/2016	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children benefit from having exceptionally strong relationships with staff. The staff provide care that consistently exceeds expectations. This exceptional care gives a solid foundation from which children make progress and thrive.

Children make excellent progress in improving their emotional and mental health. The managers and staff work effectively, utilising in-house therapeutic approaches and the child and adolescent mental health services to improve children's mental health. For all children, staff have implemented individualised approaches to managing and reducing the frequency of self-harm and risk-taking behaviours. These have proved to be, in most cases, successful.

Children benefit from receiving well-planned, highly individualised care that meets their needs effectively. Staff address the issues experienced by children, by helping them to work through their problems and fears, and any anxieties. Staff stand by children and they do not give up on them easily.

Staff work in partnership with the families of children, their schools, social workers and other professional agencies to ensure that children benefit from receiving effective help and the best possible all-round support. A social worker said, 'The staff team is so incredible. I do not have the words to articulate how amazing the staff all are. I am forever grateful for their commitment and care and the unconditional love that they have shown my child.'

Children who come to live at the home have often experienced poor school attendance and disruption to their education. However, the children now attend school or alternative education provisions regularly, with support and encouragement from staff. The children are making good educational progress. Staff ensure that children have personal educational plans to promote their progress, achievements and learning. Children are more confident and assertive.

Staff foster a culture of high aspiration and positivity that leads to changes and improvements in the children's lives. Children's inclusion in community life is impressive. They enjoy an extensive range of well-considered activities and experiences, which are thoroughly risk assessed in line with their plans. The children have a great sense of fun and their laughter fills the home. Activities include trips to food festivals, cottage holidays in Cornwall, gymnastics and dance classes. The children have built, with the support of staff, a greenhouse made entirely of used plastic bottles, which looks impressive and is eco-friendly. Children develop their social skills, talents, interests and hobbies.

Children benefit from living in a comfortable, spacious and well-maintained home. They help to choose soft furnishings, and one child helped to build a bespoke piece of furniture for their bedroom. Children have lovely bedrooms that they can decorate to their taste. Children are central to the decisions made about their home, which gives

them a sense of pride in where they live, so it is rare for damage to be done to the home.

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

The staff work hard to keep children safe, and children said that they feel safe. Detailed and robust risk assessments for each child guide staff practice and clarify what actions staff should take to safeguard children. These assessments are regularly updated by managers and staff, taking into account the views of partner agencies and the children.

The response of staff and managers to significant and concerning incidents is excellent, with the primary concern always being the safety and well-being of children. Following such incidents, the managers undertake detailed debriefs with staff and children to understand the underlying causes.

Staff are vigilant to children's behavioural changes and mood swings. When such changes become apparent, the staff take immediate action. The staff understand the children's vulnerabilities and the associated potential dangers. The staff are effective in preventing situations from escalating, which has led to an overall reduction in the number of concerning incidents.

Staff maintain highly effective partnerships with the police and other safeguarding agencies to keep children safe. Staff are trained in child protection, and in understanding and managing child sexual exploitation, county lines and radicalisation. They are well informed about and familiar with their safeguarding roles. Staff consistently prioritise the safety of children, irrespective of the challenges this presents.

Children are protected if they are absent or go missing from the home. Staff actively look for them and work closely with the police to locate children quickly and secure their safe return home. Children become increasingly safe because of the actions that staff take to support and protect them.

The staff help children to understand and manage their feelings and behaviours safely. Sanctions are rarely used. Following any incident, robust debriefing meetings take place with the child and the staff involved, to reflect on and discuss at length the support needed and the changes to plans required to reduce the likelihood of future incidents occurring.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager and deputy manager have high expectations of staff and consistently high aspirations for all of the children. They are ambitious, enthusiastic and experienced, and ensure that the home is managed efficiently and effectively. They lead the staff by example and ensure that the staff have a clear sense of purpose and direction.

The staff spoke of feeling empowered and motivated. They feel listened to and supported by managers. Staff take on responsibilities linked with their own interests, acting as champions. This provides staff with opportunities for professional development and leads to improvements in the staff's practice. For example, a new post has been created for a nominated member of the team to work in partnership with families, to gather and analyse information using feedback tools. This innovative piece of work has proved to be successful in supporting staff in their day-to-day care practice.

There is a great level of expertise in the team. The staff work closely with a range of health, education and social care professionals. This provides a consistent care approach across different settings. A new member of staff said, 'I am really impressed by the communication. I am really proud to be part of the team.'

The staff team has regular meetings about the children and staff dynamics. This promotes consistency of practice among the staff and enables the staff team to work cohesively to ensure positive outcomes for children.

Staff benefit from receiving high-quality training that enables them to meet children's needs. Staff receive regular practice-related supervision in which they are encouraged to reflect on their performance. A multitude of resources, as well as learning based on research and therapeutic theory, are available to the staff, who implement this learning in their practice.

The performance of the home is scrutinised effectively. The manager consults with the families of children, social workers and independent reviewing officers to review how they feel about the service and how the needs of children are being met. The manager makes effective use of the home's internal and external monitoring activities to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home. The manager tackles weaknesses effectively to secure continuous improvement.

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: SC065792

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Institute of Integrated Systemic Therapy

Registered provider address: 210 Borough High Street, London SE1 1JX

Responsible individual: Stephen Blunden

Registered manager: David Pound

Inspector

Cathy Russell: social care inspector

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