

1271135

Registered provider: Stockport Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a local authority. It provides care for up to six children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, six children were living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2024.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 October 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 22 August 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/08/2023	Full	Good
03/11/2022	Full	Good
18/08/2021	Full	Good
12/06/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff provide children with a nurturing environment. Staff have high aspirations for children and want them to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Children's care plans are detailed, known and implemented by staff who place positive outcomes for children at the forefront of their practice. Care plans are kept under review and amended as required to further reflect the progress and needs of each child. Where additional resources are identified, including access to child and adolescent mental health services, the registered manager ensures that these are requested and sourced. Staff work in partnership with other agencies to ensure that the care provided is consistent and reflective of each child's needs.

Some children have not previously engaged in education and are still struggling with this. The registered manager and staff work with education providers to promote bespoke education packages and seek alternative provisions to best meet children's individual learning needs. One child recently achieved good grades in recent exams and this was acknowledged and celebrated to reflect the effort and work they had put in to achieve their results.

Children are supported to understand the importance of good health. When children are involved in substance misuse, appropriate guidance and referrals are made to specialist services to help children address this and to have a greater understanding of the impact this has on their health.

Children have positive relationships with staff and say that they are treated with dignity and respect. When children have any concerns, they say they feel able to discuss these with staff who provide support to address their concerns.

Individual activities are encouraged for all children. Staff try to encourage children to continue to follow interests they may have previously had and source the resources locally. Children are also encouraged to take part in activities in the home. At the time of this visit, the children were involved in decorating the home ready for Halloween and were entering a competition for this.

Clear arrangements are in place and supported for children to spend time with family and friends. Where there are restrictions on family time to safeguard children, these are known and adhered to by staff. This helps to keep children safe.

The wishes and views of children are regularly sought to help them to have an input into their care and support. While individual sessions are held with children, there are gaps in the recording of these. This has been identified by the registered manager who is taking action to address this.

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

Staff understand the individual risks for each child. Comprehensive risk assessments are in place for each child. These are kept up to date and monitored regularly to reflect on whether the strategies implemented are effective, as well as ensuring that any new or emerging risks are clearly identified. Staff ensure that preventative strategies are followed and this contributes to supporting the children's safety and well-being.

Staff recognise and understand the children's specific needs and past traumas which impact on behaviours and support children with specific behaviour support plans. This enables them to provide individualised support for each child. Staff are consistent in implementing these plans and support children to manage their own behaviours in a positive manner. Staff speak with children about potential risks and behaviours to enable them to understand how they can contribute to their own safety and well-being.

All children have comprehensive missing from home risk assessments. Staff understand the 'push/pull factors' that children experience. When children go missing, staff follow agreed procedures and make every effort to enable children to return safely to the home. The registered manager makes sure independent return home interviews are offered to children to enable them to discuss the reasons why they went missing from the home, and where there is any concern in relation to the home, for this to be addressed.

Staff understand the dynamics of group living and how, at times, this can increase anxiety for some children and the potential for bullying. Staff are vigilant to this possibility and take appropriate action to address any incidents of bullying.

Children are protected by the organisation's effective recruitment practices. Staff are vetted and assessed as suitable before any appointment is confirmed. These procedures promote the safety of children by preventing unsuitable adults from working with them.

Regular health and safety checks are undertaken, as well as fire drills and evacuation. This includes children to make sure they understand the procedures to follow in the event of a fire.

The home is a large home and internally it provides a warm and welcoming environment. However, externally, the home has some areas which require repair and maintenance. This includes external paintwork and the pathway around the house which is a potential hazard as it is heavily covered with moss.

Consequences for negative behaviours are fair. However, children's views are not consistently recorded on consequence records. This is a missed opportunity to reflect the children's views clearly.

Use of physical intervention is only used to protect a child from harm. When this has occurred, records are maintained. However, some records are not detailed and rely on cross reference with other reports which can lead to confusion.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last inspection, there has been a change of registered manager, with the previous manager being promoted. A new manager appointed in February has been registered to be the home's manager. She has a background of working with children including in residential care and demonstrates a good understanding of her role and responsibilities as a registered manager. She is supported in her role by the previous home's manager as well as two deputy managers, all of whom have high aspirations for children.

The staff team in place has recently had some changes due to the opening of another home by the local authority. However, this has been managed well to make sure that there has been continuity of staff for children.

All staff receive regular supervision which helps them to continue to develop within their role. Training further underpins this and all staff complete mandatory training within agreed timescales. Those staff who do not hold the formal qualification are placed on this course following their probationary period. Detailed handovers each day enable effective communication to enable staff to provide the support required. Staff meetings take place regularly where all staff can contribute to them and use these as opportunities for further developing their practice and skills.

Children's records are maintained electronically which enables staff to access these to update and record daily events. The registered manager has good oversight of documents and has identified where there are shortfalls in records and is taking appropriate action to address this. Further independent monitoring of the home also supports the registered manager in her role. She ensures that any recommendations made are addressed in a timely manner.

At the last inspection, two recommendations were made. One has been addressed in full in relation to missing from home. The other one in relation to physical intervention and recording children's views has only partially been addressed and therefore has been made a requirement at this inspection.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards.' The registered person must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person") has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. Regulation 35 ((1) (3)(a)(b)(c)) This specifically relates to ensuring that any consequences imposed are recorded and the views of the child recorded.	1 January 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. In particular, that key-person sessions are completed when identified and recorded clearly. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children. They will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. In particular, repairs must be completed in a timely manner and the external paintwork be replaced or repaired. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards.' page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: 1271135

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Stockport council

Registered provider address: Fred Perry House, 10 Edward Street, Stockport SK1 3XE

Responsible individual: Elizabeth Vetcher

Registered manager: Cheryl Wilson

Inspector

Sarah Oldham, Social Care Inspector

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