

2507724

Registered provider: Coventry City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides care for up to four children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

The registered manager left in October 2024. A new manager has been appointed since the last inspection. Since this inspection, they have submitted an application to register with Ofsted. The new manager holds a level 5 leadership and management qualification.

Four children were living in the home at the time of the inspection. Only one child present during the visit took part in the inspection.

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 February 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor, and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 1 August 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/08/2023	Full	Good
11/05/2022	Full	Good
26/01/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
06/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

There are significant safeguarding failings at this home. These relate to the potential exploitation of children, responses to children who are missing from home and understanding the risks posed to children online and in the community. As a result, children have been placed at potential risk of harm.

Two children have lived in the home for a significant period. Two others have recently moved in and since then there has been a significant increase in disruptive incidents. This has affected children who were already living at the home, who at times have not wanted to return from seeing family members and, for one child, when they have been missing from home. Managers have not fully recognised the impact of children's actions and behaviours on each other and have failed to make suitable arrangements to help children feel settled, safe and secure in their home.

The home environment is in poor condition and is not well maintained. The manager knows where improvements are required; however, there have been delays in addressing these shortfalls. This means that children are not provided with a warm, homely environment and this has potential to impact on their day-to-day experiences.

There has been some positive progress and experiences for children. For example, staff make efforts to meet children's physical health needs. Children are registered with local health services and attend routine health appointments when needed. Additionally, another child has been well supported and educated around significant recent changes in their life.

There have been some challenges with children attending education. However, when they do not attend, staff make efforts to provide children with learning opportunities in the home. Staff have also worked with professionals to identify a school for one child, and the child has recently started to attend this following a significant absence. Another child is due to start an online education course soon.

Staff support children to maintain relationships with their families. One child has been supported recently to reconnect with their parent. Other children are supported to regularly spend time with their families and have positive experiences with them. Furthermore, staff work with children and their families to overcome any barriers or problems they have in these relationships. This approach helps children to stay connected and reconnect with people who are important in their lives.

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

The staff and managers who work in this home do not ensure that children are safe. Risks relating to the potential and likely exploitation of one child are not fully understood or appropriately responded to. It was identified on more than one occasion that a child

was in possession of large amounts of unexplained money and fraudulent documents. While some work to educate the child about the dangers and signs of exploitation did take place, there were no clear strategies put in place to manage the risks. The lack of risk management is compounded by a reluctance from external agencies to accept the level of risk, which was escalated by managers from the home. Although managers did escalate their concerns to a point, this has not been consistent and there has been no challenge to external agencies about their decision-making. The lack of decisive action by staff and managers and an absence of a multi-agency approach has meant there has been a failure to identify the level of risk the child has been subject to, and it is unclear whether the child remains at increased risk of exploitation or criminalisation.

Children who go missing from home do not get an appropriate response from staff to secure their safety quickly. On one occasion, when a child was missing for 72 hours, staff did not search for them until the day after they were reported missing. Subsequent actions by staff to locate the child were extremely limited. Additionally, important information relating to how the child left was not obtained. There have also been delays in reporting children missing to the police in line with children's plans and not all plans offer staff the clarity they need to respond more effectively. These failures to respond appropriately to incidents of children being missing from home have left children at potential risk of harm.

There is a lack of curiosity relating to who children spend time with in the community. Staff allowed one child to have contact with an unknown male peer without any awareness as to whether this was an appropriate person for the child to spend time with. The child consequently spent the night missing from home and on their return made a disclosure about the unknown peer. As a result of this incident, another child living in the home has also become involved, which has resulted in both children suffering serious threats of violence. Lack of understanding of potential risks to children has placed children at risk of harm.

Another child was allowed to spend long periods of time away from the home with limited checks as to their whereabouts and well-being. This enabled the child to engage in a relationship with an unknown older male without staff being able to consider any additional safeguards which may have been needed in relation to this.

Staff fail to understand risks relating to who children spend time with online. Managers rely on children being open and honest about what or who they have access to via their device, internet or social media. There are no preventative strategies in place to monitor who children are associating with online. While staff have undertaken some work with children relating to online safety, children do not engage in allowing staff to make safe checks of their online activity. This limited awareness of what children are doing or accessing online has potential to place them at risk of harm.

Managers' responses when children make allegations have been positive. Immediate actions have been taken to ensure children are protected. Children have been consulted

and information has been shared with relevant agencies. Appropriate investigations have taken place to ensure that concerns are fully understood.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The previous manager left his role on 28 October 2024 to move into an operations role for the same organisation. There have been delays in the new manager submitting their application to Ofsted.

Management oversight and monitoring of the home have not been effective. Managers have failed to identify concerns about staff practice following incidents and episodes of going missing, which have potential to place the children at significant risk of harm. Appropriate follow-up work has not been completed with staff as part of the reviewing process, which means staff have missed out on opportunities for reflection and learning. Ineffective monitoring systems do not support the protection of children or improve the quality of care that they receive.

Relationships with professionals are generally positive. Professionals talk positively about the support children receive and the relationships they have with staff. However, it is evident that relationships between managers and one child's social worker are not always collaborative or effective. There have been differences of opinion relating to safeguarding matters and involving the child's transition from the home. This fragmented relationship has impacted on the timeliness of decision-making in relation to the child's safety.

Five staff have left since the last inspection and a small number of staff have joined. There remain some vacancies across the staff team which have generally been covered by relief staff or staff from other homes. Staff have been impacted by several factors, including the change in manager, new children moving into the home and staff vacancies. There are increased levels of sickness across the team of late, which also impacts on staff's ability to manage any behaviour that challenges effectively. Despite these challenges, staff spoken to were positive about working in the home and the support they receive from managers.

Staff training is not always up to date. There are several staff who are outside timescales for refreshing their training, including safeguarding and online safety. Additionally, training records indicate that not all staff have completed courses relevant to the specific needs of children. However, managers were able to demonstrate that they have identified some areas of staff development and are using team forums to deliver additional learning. For example, recording and reporting training was due to take place with the team on the first day of the inspection. Managers have also used the skills of partner agencies to deliver additional training to staff on occasions.

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, The 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
*The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. help each child to understand how to keep safe. have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other. understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)) In particular, the manager must take steps to reduce any risk of children being exploited and understand who children are associating with online and in the community. Additionally, the manager must ensure that clear procedures are in place for responding to children who go missing from care and that staff actively follow the procedures in place.	10 April 2025

The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) In particular, the manager must ensure there is effective review of incidents involving children with clear challenge, evaluation and learning to improve practice. They must also review and recognise the impact of children's actions on other children living in the home and make suitable adjustments to promote their welfare.	24 April 2025
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children. use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii))	24 April 2025

In particular, the manager must ensure that the environment is homely and comfortable for children and any improvements are made without delay.	
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child’s placing authority effectively in the child’s care, in accordance with the child’s relevant plans. seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child’s needs. if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority’s or a relevant person’s performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child’s needs are met in accordance with the child’s relevant plans; and seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children’s home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5(a)(b)(c)(d) In particular, the manager must ensure that effective relationships are maintained with professionals in the best interests of supporting children. Additionally, the manager must take steps to escalate concerns and make continuous challenge to agencies and professionals if they feel decisions are not being made in the best interest of the child and are compromising their safety.	24 April 2025
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential. and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—	24 April 2025

ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(e))

This requirement has not been met from the last full inspection and is therefore restated.

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: 2507724

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Coventry City Council

Registered provider address: Council House, Earl Street, Coventry CV1 5RR

Responsible individual: Angela Whitrick

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Carl Wilton, Social Care Inspector

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