

2598205

Registered provider: Hull City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a single-placement home for one child with emotional and/or social difficulties. It is operated by a local authority. The home and manager were both registered in July 2020.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

This is the first full inspection of the home.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 January 2022

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: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
Not previously inspected		

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children who live in the home have complex emotional and behavioural needs. Staff provide care which is highly individualised and responsive to the children's needs and particular vulnerabilities. Although progress for the children is not linear, they do make progress during their time living in the home. Children and carers build strong relationships, and consistent guidance helps children understand and control their emotions and behaviour. One child achieved qualifications and gained employment, which is significant progress relative to their starting point.

Staff work closely with health, education and social care professionals to implement bespoke care plans. This effective multi-disciplinary approach helps children achieve increased independence and freedoms safely. When children move out of the home, this is done in a planned way, including preparation and consultation with the child.

Managers and staff establish trusted relationships with parents, which provides opportunities to promote consistency in the way children are supported. Staff recognise the importance of maintaining family relationships for children and promote increased time with family. This is beneficial for the children's emotional well-being and sense of identity.

Children's health needs are broadly met, although there is a lack of community availability of specific interventions related to emotional and psychological health. When this cannot be provided in the local area, leaders and managers advocate for the children and escalate concerns over any lack of provision. They also mitigate this gap by securing other types of less specialist support. While not a long-term solution, this does provide some input in the interim.

Children's wishes and feelings are central to the care that is provided. Partly due to building strong relationships with a consistent core team, there are opportunities for meaningful conversations when children's views are explored. This has led to advocacy for the children in terms of education, contact with family and a move on to more independent living. When children's wishes are incompatible with their care plan, this is explained to them sensitively, and alternatives are discussed until a compromise can be reached. This helps children to feel that they have some control over their lives and that their views and feelings are valued.

Due to the court orders which apply to the children, there are restrictions that reduce opportunities to experience typical childhood freedoms. Despite this, the staff are creative in providing alternative ways that children can learn about the world and enjoy fun and meaningful activities. When children experience times of crisis or distress, staff support them in a way which aligns with their plans. Through this skilled response, they help children to feel safe during these periods.

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

Risks are well understood by the manager and staff, and they are regularly reviewed both within the staff team and in a multi-agency forum. Written records reflect the risks; however, some key pieces of information are not recorded in the most obvious location or are omitted from some documents. This raises the potential of staff not having the fullest understanding of both current and historic risks, especially if they are only working in the home sporadically.

When children go missing, staff follow agreed plans consistently to return children quickly and safely. The number of missing episodes fluctuates; however, at times, they have been very frequent. Despite this, staff show tenacity in undertaking searches and seeking to understand reasons why children may leave the home. The home is designed and maintained to minimise opportunities for children to go missing, and staff reflect on incidents and modify their practice to further reduce opportunities.

The condition of the premises is variable. The communal areas are very well presented and are comfortable and clean. However, there are two holes in the child's bedroom wall which have been there a number of weeks. Not only is this unsightly but allows access to harmful materials. The appearance of the bedroom is also not of the highest quality, as actions taken to reduce hazards have resulted in the space no longer feeling cosy and nurturing. The lack of blinds and curtains also compromise the child's privacy, and there is no area for safe storage of possessions.

Experienced and trained staff support children effectively to manage their behaviour. This results in calling for police support only as a last resort. The threshold for police involvement is not explicitly described in the child's behaviour plan. This does not ensure that there is a common understanding of this. If children need to be held to keep them and others safe, this is done by staff who are appropriately trained. This helps to ensure everyone's safety.

There has not been a night-time fire drill, which is important given children's opportunistic behaviour for absconding. This does not support staff or children's insight should a real fire occur.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers have high aspirations for children in their care. Despite the pressures resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, staff have supported children to make progress, become increasingly safe and move on. Managers drive the children's progress and challenge shortfalls in the practice of others or lack of provision of service. This results in children benefiting from access to specialist support.

Professionals describe leaders and staff as going 'above and beyond' to meet children's needs. Practice is reflective, and the manager takes opportunities to identify when things can be improved and works quickly to make those

improvements. When there have been significant incidents, lessons have been learned; through responsive and flexible staffing and multi-agency plans, children's changing needs are met. The manager promotes regular multi-agency consultation, collaboration and discussion. This ensures diverse and appropriate expertise are available to staff and children.

Supervision is of good quality, but both the frequency of supervision and the completion of annual appraisals have not been in line with the home's policy. This reduces opportunities for staff to discuss their work or for the manager to explore training and development needs with staff.

A requirement made at the previous monitoring visit relating to training and systems for reviewing room searches has been met.

The manager understands the home's strengths and weaknesses. She has ensured staff have received training which equips them to create a nurturing environment as well as to safeguard children effectively. This results in a culture which seeks to help children develop and achieve, alongside offering them protection.

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
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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(d)) This refers to ensuring the child's bedroom is properly maintained and hazard free.	31 January 2022
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)(c))	28 February 2022
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; and are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)) This refers to ensuring information pertaining to risk is consistently recorded in the full range of plans and child's records.	28 February 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure staff 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. This refers to conducting night-time fire drills. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.9)
- The registered person should agree with their local police force, procedures and guidance on police involvement with the home to reduce unnecessary police involvement in managing behaviour and criminalisation of behaviours. Children should not be charged with offences resulting from behaviour within a children's home that would not similarly lead to police involvement if it occurred in a family home. This refers to plans stating explicitly when the threshold for police intervention is met. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.40)

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: 2598205

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hull City Council

Registered provider address: Kingston upon Hull City Council, The Guildhall,
Alfred Gelder Street, Hull HU1 2AA

Responsible individual: Michele Colthup

Registered manager: Charlene Martin

Inspector

Rachel Ruth, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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