

2626053

Registered provider: Warrington Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority home which is registered to provide care for up to six children with social and emotional difficulties. Admissions are made on both a planned and emergency basis. Children coming to live at the home are aged between 12 and 17 years. The home uses the No Wrong Door model, as part of the Strengthening Families, Protecting Children programme. Children are provided with short-term care while their needs are assessed, and plans are made for their future permanence.

The registered manager has been in post since June 2021.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 September 2025

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: 23 July 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/07/2024	Full	Good
24/01/2024	Full	Good
27/07/2022	Full	Good
22/02/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

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

Children have positive experiences living in the home. Children share positive relationships with staff members. This supports children to feel safe and make good progress. One child spoke positively about the staff and said: 'I trust and respect them.' One child said: 'It feels like my home.'

Staff know the children well, which helps children to experience safe and consistent care. Staff work closely with children's family and support children to maintain and strengthen relationships with family members. Due to the home's model of care, some staff already know the children and families through outreach work.

Care planning practice is effective for children. Leaders and managers complete a robust assessment of each child's needs before they move into the home. They also consider the needs of the other children living in the home. Staff support children to move into the home in a positive way, even in emergency situations. This helps children to understand what is happening and feel reassured about what to expect. Staff speak to children about their longer-term plans and support children to move on from the home in a planned way.

Staff spend time with children to actively seek and listen to their views, ensuring that their voices are heard and valued. Children personalise their bedrooms to their taste. This helps each child to have a strong sense of belonging. Staff have purchased arts and crafts and baking items to allow children to engage in activities they enjoy at home. Children have access to a gym in the home and can also access the local gym and leisure facilities. Children have opportunities to engage in new activities and have enjoyed go-karting and attending the local golf driving range.

Staff support children to develop structure and routines, centred around engaging positively in education. The manager and staff work with education professionals to ensure that each individual child can access education appropriate to their assessed needs. This supports children to make good academic progress.

Children are supported by staff to complete age-appropriate independence tasks in preparation for their futures. Staff support children to learn how to cook, clean, budget and use public transport independently. This improves children's resilience and confidence.

Children's health needs are met. Children are registered with local health services and staff make referrals to other services, such as mental health and substance misuse agencies, to support children's needs. Children and staff receive timely support and

advice from a designated speech and language therapist and psychologist as part of the model of care.

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

Safeguarding practice in the home is good. Managers and staff know the children's vulnerabilities well and have a good understanding of their needs and risks. Risk management plans are detailed and individualised. They are reviewed regularly and provide staff with clear strategies to follow. Children say they feel safe living in the home and have a sense of well-being.

Staff take appropriate action when children are missing from the home and actively search for them. Staff and social workers speak to children when they return from being missing from the home. However, children do not consistently have the opportunity to speak to an independent person. This is a missed opportunity to gather information about the incident and for the child to share any concerns.

If there are concerns that children are under the influence of substances, staff access medical advice and complete appropriate observations of children. Room searches are completed to ensure that children are not in possession of items that may impact their safety. Staff inform and involve children in the room searches and complete an accurate record of the search.

Medication is stored safely and regular audits are carried out. There have been some medication errors, which have been fully investigated by managers. When these have occurred, the manager has ensured that staff have been retrained and completed medication competencies.

Multi-agency working provides robust safety planning for children. Staff work closely with children's social workers and contextual safeguarding teams within the authority and share information effectively. Managers and staff also work with wider professionals, including the police and health professionals, to promote children's safety and welfare.

Staff support children's understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Staff are creative and use appropriate online resources to educate children on issues that may impact them. Staff discuss important topics with children, including bullying, dangers of substance misuse, exploitation and how to stay safe in the local community.

Children understand what to do if they need to raise any concerns. An allegation was made which was appropriately investigated by the manager. Staff are clear on whistle-blowing procedures to keep children safe.

Children's relationships with staff and the use of effective behaviour support plans mean that children's behaviour is managed well. Staff speak to children with openness and honesty and children feel respected and valued. Staff are able to de-escalate situations effectively, and there have been no incidents of a child needing to be held since the last

inspection. Positive behaviour is encouraged through rewards and incentives. Consequences are used when appropriate and the manager has good oversight of these to ensure the measures are effective.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is child centred and wants all children to have a positive experience of living in the home. The manager is supported by an experienced deputy manager and a suitable responsible individual.

The home is managed in a competent, effective and professional manner. Recording is clear, accessible and organised. There are detailed records in place which highlight children's experiences and progress. The manager has effective oversight of incidents and uses this to develop staff.

Children are cared for by an established and experienced staff team. The home uses sessional workers who are familiar to the children to cover shifts to ensure that children have consistency of care by staff they know well. The home has recently recruited three new staff members to fill current vacancies in the staff team. Agency staff are used, and the manager ensures that appropriate checks and training are in place before staff work in the home.

Professionals are positive about the care that children receive. An independent reviewing officer for several children who currently live in the home said: 'Children feel listened to, and develop their identity and self-worth,' and 'The kids love it here, they want to stay.'

Staff working in the home feel valued and listened to. They enjoy working in the home. One staff member said: 'I love it here, and love working with the children.'

Staff receive a range of training in line with children's needs. However, records of staff training are not kept up to date to ensure that there is an accurate record. A high number of staff are qualified, and newer staff are enrolled on an appropriate qualification in relation to working in residential childcare. Staff receive regular high-quality supervision and team meetings. Staff are provided with opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge.

Leaders and managers' monitoring and oversight of the home are not consistently effective. A failure to ensure daily checks of one child's bedroom led to a deterioration in its condition. Immediate action was taken to rectify this issue during this inspection. Furthermore, the manager's review of the quality of care report does not contain the views of children.

The independent person conducts monthly visits to the home and produces detailed reports. However, they do not consistently gain feedback from children about the quality of care provided. This is a missed opportunity for children to share their views, raise concerns or highlight any areas for improvement.

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 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)(h)) In particular, the registered person must have effective monitoring and review systems in place to monitor the maintenance of children's bedrooms. The registered person must ensure that the feedback and opinions of children are included in the review of the quality of care report, and ensure that the independent person gains the views of the children as part of the independent visits.	31 October 2025

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. The home should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

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: 2626053

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Council office (1 Time Square), 1 Time Square,
Warrington WA1 2NT

Responsible individual: Russell Kelly

Registered manager: Chantelle Williams

Inspectors

Suzanne Birchall, Social Care Inspector
Judith Birchall, Social Care Inspector

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