

2626053

Registered provider: Warrington Borough 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 six children between the ages of 12 and 17 years. The home is part of the No Wrong Door initiative. It provides children with integrated care while their needs and future permanency are being assessed. It accepts both planned and emergency admissions.

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.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 February 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 **requires improvement to be 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: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make noticeable progress from their starting points. They benefit from a model of integrated care where they receive individualised help and support from a multidisciplinary team.

The designated psychologist and speech and language therapist (SALT) provide children with expert help and support. The open-door policy ensures that children have easy access to this resource, which helps them to build trusting relationships with key members of the team. A child who had previously been reluctant to receive therapeutic support is now engaging with the psychologist. This is a significant achievement. Children's emotional needs are fully understood and their emotional health improves.

Staff support children to overcome any barriers to their education. They work collaboratively with schools to ensure that children's needs are fully understood and accommodated. For example, staff arranged a reduced school timetable for a child who was experiencing emotional difficulties. This has enabled the child to continue with their education while receiving the help and support that they need.

Children are prepared well for their futures and this has resulted in several children moving on successfully to permanent care, such as foster care. An element of the integrated care model is the recruitment of foster carers who work in the home. This enables children to get to know their potential foster carers and make informed choices about their future care arrangements. This innovative approach has resulted in a child achieving permanency through foster care.

Staff support children to be successfully reunited with their families. Staff's outreach support to children and families has enabled several children to return to the care of their families in a safe and supported way.

The quality of relationships between staff and children is good. The nurturing staff team ensures that children are listened to. This helps children to build trusting, positive relationships with staff.

In the main, children move to the home in a carefully planned way. This often involves visits to the home, which give children the opportunity to meet staff and other children. However, on one occasion, a child moved to the home in an emergency and staff were unable to meet their needs. Leaders and managers acknowledged that this was not suitable and made arrangements for the child to move from the home as soon as possible. Although the decision to move the child to the home was centred around the child's welfare and safety, their experience of living at the home was inconsistent.

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

Children become increasingly safer when they move to this home. This is largely down to the trusting relationships that staff build with the children.

Staff's strong collaborative working with the designated police liaison officer is helping to identify and reduce risk, such as potential child criminal exploitation. For example, through the sharing of intelligence, the police were able to swiftly intervene and deter a child from criminal activity.

Staff know the children well and are fully aware of their needs and vulnerabilities. This is reflected in the children's comprehensive risk assessments and behaviour management plans. These documents provide staff with clear and effective strategies, which help them to safeguard children consistently.

Staff are proactive when children go missing from home. This includes actively looking for them and alerting all relevant professionals to ensure that they are quickly located and any potential harm is minimised. When children persistently go missing from home, staff escalate their concerns to multi-agency strategy meetings. This ensures a coordinated joint response to serious safeguarding matters.

Safeguarding incidents are well documented. This enables the manager to maintain strong oversight of risk and staff's safeguarding practice. Incidents are reported promptly to all relevant professionals, which enhances scrutiny and a swift investigation into concerns.

Staff's approach to managing children's internet and mobile phone use is not always consistently robust. While some staff are proactive and find ways to monitor children's internet use, some do not. This does not ensure the safety of all children

The home's location assessment provides a detailed overview of the local area and identifies potential risks in the community. However, it lacks evaluation of risk and clear strategies for managing it.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

A suitably qualified and experienced registered manager leads the home with the support of two deputy managers. Leaders and managers undoubtedly have children's welfare at heart.

The team is sufficiently staffed and stable. This supports children to develop positive and lasting relationships with a consistent staff team.

The manager's monitoring systems are an area for improvement. For example, staff training records are not being kept up to date to ensure that the manager maintains strong oversight of all staff's learning and development.

The manager does not ensure that the staff are provided with bespoke training that reflects the children's needs and vulnerabilities, such as self-harm, substance misuse, radicalisation, and child criminal and sexual exploitation.

The statement of purpose does not provide all the required information. Details of the relief staff who regularly work in the home and the supervision arrangements for the psychologist and SALT are not provided. This prevents the home's regulator from having a thorough overview of all staff working at the home.

The home is welcoming and homely. The communal areas of the home and most of the children's bedrooms are well maintained. However, some broken furniture in the vacant bedrooms detracts from the homely feeling that the staff and children work hard to achieve.

The manager's quality of care review report is overly descriptive and lacks evaluation. It fails to provide a clear analysis of the quality of care and protection provided to children. The report frequently refers to personal information about children and their families. This is unnecessary and undermines children's privacy.

Staff feel supported and valued. They receive regular individual and team supervision. This provides them with the opportunity to reflect on their practice and share any areas of concern and positive outcomes. However, staff's annual performance appraisals do not provide them with sufficient detail on how they can continue to develop, for example actions for further learning and training.

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 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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(h)) This relates to ensuring that staff are provided with training around the children's specific needs. Also, that robust monitoring systems are in place.	6 April 2022
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (1) (3)(a)(b)) This relates to ensuring that all information in the statement of purpose is correct and up to date. All staff's details and the provision for staff supervisions must be included.	6 April 2022

Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)) This relates to ensuring that the staff duty roster provides a record of the actual hours worked, including by managers.	6 April 2022
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c)) This relates to ensuring that the review of the quality of care provided to children is evaluative and children's privacy is respected in the report.	6 April 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all children's bedrooms are clean and broken furniture is repaired or replaced. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.3)
- The registered person should ensure that staff continually and actively assess children's use of the internet and their mobile phones. When there are safeguarding concerns for a child, staff must take appropriate and consistent steps to minimise potential harm. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The registered person should ensure that that the home's location assessment clearly identifies the strategies for managing any identified risks in the local area. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

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: Warrington Borough Council

Registered provider address: Warrington Borough Council, Children's Services,
New Town House, Buttermarket Street, Warrington WA1 2NH

Responsible individual: Sharon Cooper

Registered manager: Chantelle Williams

Inspectors

Marina Tully, Social Care Inspector
Rose Maddocks, Social Care Inspector

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