

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. 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 (SFPC). 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: 24 and 25 January 2024

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: 27 July 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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 three children living at the home. One child moved out to semi-independent living on the second day of the inspection. This was a planned move for the child.

Children receive care from staff who quickly get to know them and are responsive to their needs. Children are supported to express their views about the home and decisions about their care. One child's independent reviewing officer said that since moving to the home, the child has been supported to attend their court meetings, something the child would not do previously.

Staff have a good understanding of children's communication needs. Children benefit from having a speech and language therapist based at the home as a communication support worker. He ensures that by working with both staff and the children the voices of children are heard and considered by the manager.

Staff are committed to children's learning and help them access their education provision. The manager worked closely with the virtual schools team to secure a college place for one child. When children are not in school, leaders, managers and staff ensure that there is an education plan in place for children to follow at home. Children receive certificates for courses completed in the home, which helps them in applying for jobs.

The plans for moving children in and out of the home are clear and effective. Staff work with children to prepare them for living independently. They help them access further education or find employment. Children are also supported to learn essential independence skills, such as cooking and shopping.

Leaders, managers and staff provide a homely environment for children, who are supported to personalise their rooms to reflect their interests. However, staff have an allocated shower room and toilet that are kept locked and are not accessible to the children. This creates an institutional feel. In addition, some communal areas of the home, such as the laundry, require some repair work and redecoration.

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

When children go missing from the home, there is a proactive response from staff to quickly locate them. This is well coordinated with partner agencies. In line with missing-from-home protocols, staff carry out local area searches for children.

Risk management plans are detailed and identify any known or emerging risks for children. Plans are promptly updated and shared with the team, so that staff understand the action they should take to keep children safe.

When a child makes an allegation, safeguarding procedures are followed. Since the last inspection, one allegation has been made. Leaders and managers worked jointly with safeguarding professionals to ensure that appropriate action was taken following the allegation.

Physical restraint is used as a last resort to keep children safe. Records provide details of the hold, the debrief with the child and management oversight. However, leaders and managers have failed to identify that, on occasions, the staff who were involved in the restraint have also completed the child's debrief.

The recruitment records of one new member of staff, who had previously worked with vulnerable people, did not show that leaders and managers had taken reasonable steps to understand and verify why their employment ended.

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

The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced and is child-focused. Staff describe her as a supportive manager.

Children receive consistent care from a dedicated staff team. There has been an increase in the use of agency staff to provide one-to-one support to a child who is subject to a deprivation of liberty order. However, permanent staff, who know the children well and have positive relationships with them, work alongside the agency staff.

Leaders and managers work jointly with partner agencies to consider children's risks and the most effective way to manage these, so that children receive care that promotes their safety and well-being.

Staff say they feel supported by the manager. However, supervision of staff is inconsistent. Leaders and managers have not undertaken supervision with agency staff. This is a missed opportunity to develop and guide staff practice in accordance with the home's policies.

When agency staff have not followed children's risk assessments, this has been referred to the agency manager to investigate, rather than being addressed directly by the home's manager. Furthermore, leaders and managers have not made sure that agency staff are part of handover meetings, to ensure that there is continuity of safe and effective working practices in caring for all children.

There has been a delay in the reporting of significant events to Ofsted, which means the regulator has not had the opportunity to assess in a timely manner whether children are being safeguarded effectively.

Management oversight of the home is not always effective. Leaders and managers have not identified that mandatory first-aid training for one member of staff is out of

date. In addition, following review of incidents, poor practice has not been addressed so that the quality of care that children receive can be improved.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (2)(c)(i)(ii)) Specifically, areas of the home such as the laundry and other communal areas should be well maintained.	21 March 2024
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(e)(h))	21 March 2024

Specifically, leaders and managers should ensure that there are effective monitoring systems in place to identify when mandatory training needs to be updated. Furthermore, leaders and managers must ensure that following the use of restraint, the staff member who used the measure is not involved in the debrief with the child. Leaders and managers should ensure that agency staff who regularly work at the home receive supervision and are part of handovers.	
The registered person must ensure that— children can access all appropriate areas of the children’s home’s premises; and any limitation placed on a child’s privacy or access to any area of the home’s premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised. (Regulation 21 (b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)) This relates to leaders and managers ensuring that staff-only toilets and shower rooms are not locked and do not have signs on.	21 March 2024
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children’s home; if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;	21 March 2024

the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and

full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.
(Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d))

Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that when applicants have worked with vulnerable people, efforts are made to obtain a reference from their former employer to confirm the reason for them leaving the role.

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: 1 Time Square, Warrington WA1 2NT

Responsible individual: Sharon Cooper

Registered manager: Chantelle Williams

Inspector

Chibuzo Otache, Social Care Inspector

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