

2677302

Registered provider: North West Youth Services

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private provider. It provides care for up to three children who may experience social and emotional difficulties and who may have learning disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2024.

Two children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection date: 9 October 2024

Date of last inspection: 29 May 2024

Judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspectors evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

The assurance inspection was brought forward to address specific concerns or allegations received by Ofsted.

Ofsted did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection. However, there were several areas which require improvement.

Since the last inspection, one child has moved out of the home in line with their wishes. Two children live in the home and are both making progress. The children enjoy living in the home, and one child said, 'I am very happy.'

The children experience something similar to a sibling relationship. They enjoy spending time with one another and like to bake, read, draw and go out in their local community.

Children have positive relationships with staff who have worked at the home for some time. However, there has been a number of staff changes, which has led to a period of instability for children. As a result, children have not always received consistent care, specifically in relation to supporting their behaviour.

Staff do not consistently demonstrate that they understand how a child's previous trauma can have an impact on their behaviour. Consequences used are inappropriate and are not in line with the children's age and level of understanding.

Staff rarely physically hold children to keep them and others safe. However, when this does occur, staff's recording contains insufficient detail about why holds were necessary and the steps taken by staff to avoid the measure. Furthermore, there is insufficient management oversight. As a result, children's experiences are not understood. The manager cannot be assured that physical holds have been used as a last resort and that they are necessary and proportionate.

There have been occasions when a child has made comments that could constitute an allegation about staff members. Leaders have investigated the concerns; however, there is a lack of professional curiosity. In addition, leaders do not consistently follow the home's allegations management procedure, such as not always notifying the local authority designated officer. This prevents scrutiny from external safeguarding agencies.

The manager challenges when there are concerns about an inadequate response from children's placing authorities. However, leaders are not familiar with, or do not act in accordance with, the escalation policy. This offers reduced advocacy for children, which could prevent them from reaching their full potential.

Leaders and managers have monitoring and review systems, but these are not used effectively to improve the quality of care for children. Inconsistencies in practice and patterns and trends are not always identified and addressed quickly.

The home is well maintained, and children's bedrooms are personalised in line with their preferences. The children's presence is seen and heard throughout the home. There are issues with children's restricted access to a designated staff toilet on the ground floor of the home. In addition, there are several other locked cupboards. Leaders and managers understand that this does not reflect a homely environment, and they plan to address this.

The responsible individual and the registered manager are child-centred and have a clear vision of the changes they want to make to provide high-quality care for children. The responsible individual provided an action plan to continue the improvements needed in the home.

The requirements from the last inspection have been restated. In addition, requirements under regulations 5, 11 and 35 have been issued.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/05/2024	Full	Good
05/09/2023	Full	Good
15/06/2023	Full	Inadequate
27/02/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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— are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vii)(e)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	30 November 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— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and 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 the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each	30 March 2025

child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(e)(f)(h)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child’s behaviour, in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; and communicate to each child expectations about the child’s behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child’s age and understanding. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v))	30 March 2025
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; and	30 March 2025

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. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c))	
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (3)(a)(ii)(iv)(v)(vii))	30 March 2025

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that children can access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2677302

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: North West Youth Services

Registered provider address: Peine House, Hind Hill Street, Heywood OL10 1JZ

Responsible individual: Kayleigh Grice

Registered manager: Jennifer Stewart

Inspectors

Claire Webster, Social Care Inspector

Mark Cryer, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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