

2786471

Registered provider: Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by the local authority. It is registered to provide care for up to three children who experience social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

This was the home's first inspection since registration on 31 May 2024. The registered manager was absent at the time of the inspection. There was one child living in the home.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 October 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: not previously inspected

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: inadequate

There are widespread failures in safeguarding and in the leadership and management of the home. This hinders and compromises the child's experiences and progress.

The inspection was undertaken in response to concerns received by Ofsted. At the time of the inspection, one child was living in the home. The child was seen and spoken to by inspectors.

The registered manager did not consider well the needs of the child before they moved in. Due to their complex needs, the child required an established setting, with experienced staff who were well trained to safely care for them. The child moved into the home two weeks after the home was registered with Ofsted. The staff team had not received training to equip them with the skills to safely meet the child's needs. The manager did not ensure that all staff were competent in their roles. As a result, the child receives inconsistent and, at times, unsafe care.

Staff are not providing the child with care in line with the home's statement of purpose. Some staff practice is not nurturing or trauma informed. The child experiences feelings of guilt and shame due to traumatic events in their life. Staff reinforce these feelings due to their poor responses to the child's behaviour.

The child has recently started a new school. They are enjoying this and have made new friends. However, staff said they 'forgot' to buy them the correct uniform for their first day. This did not provide the child with reassurance, confidence, care and support.

The child's time with their family members is not planned or risk assessed adequately. This is despite a plan for the child's sibling to move into the home. The child's sibling has spent time in the home, including an overnight stay. This was not adequately risk assessed. As a result, both children were hurt. For example, after one activity in the community, a serious incident occurred when the children were being driven home by staff. The child and their sibling were together in the back of the car. The children displayed harmful behaviour towards one another and were both hurt. Staff stopped the car but were unable to safely de-escalate the incident. Both children got out of the car and ran away, and staff followed. Members of the public intervened to prevent further harm and the police attended. Both children were extremely frightened and distressed. The child has not seen their sibling since.

Consultation with the child is weak. Managers and staff do not understand the child's experiences and how they feel living in the home. This does not help the child to feel listened to, that their views are important and are taken seriously.

The home is modern and newly decorated. Staff have personalised the child's bedroom according to their likes and interests. However, there was damage in the home, such as

broken fire alarm points, and the radiator in the child's bedroom was hanging off the wall. The responsible individual took immediate action to ensure the damage was repaired. However, there has been a significant delay in carrying out some repairs. For example, damage to the wardrobe door and walls in the child's bedroom, caused some time ago, has not been repaired. This does not provide the child with a caring and comfortable environment.

Some staff have formed positive relationships with the child. The child said they like living in the home and that there are adults they trust. The child enjoys activities, including playing football for a local club and attending a youth club.

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

Managers and staff do not understand their roles and responsibilities when safeguarding the child. Staff do not follow the strategies outlined in the child's risk assessment to keep them safe.

Staff do not understand the child's needs or behaviour. At times, they respond to the child in a way which antagonises them. The child is then left feeling frustrated and distressed. During one incident, three staff members were present. None of them felt confident to respond to the child's behaviour. This led to an inconsistent approach and the incident escalating unnecessarily. The staff called police as they were unable to keep the child safe. After the incident, the child alleged that a staff member had harmed them. The responsible individual took appropriate action to ensure the child was safe.

The manager and staff do not plan and prepare activities in the community. Incidents have occurred while the child has been in the car with staff driving. Risk assessments regarding staff sitting in the back of the car with the child are not followed. This has led to staff having to stop the car to de-escalate the child's behaviour. This is not always effective and is dangerous.

Staff resort to using physical restraint during incidents. This often escalates the child's behaviour and at times is not effective. Furthermore, staff do not all feel safe to physically intervene.

Staff do not help the child to process and safely manage their feelings. When incidents occur, some staff lock themselves in a bedroom or they call police. The manager does not ensure that debriefs occur afterwards with the child or staff. Therefore, there is no restoration of relationships. Staff say that the child 'feels bad' following the incidents. Staff do not help the child to process their feelings in a healthy and safe way.

The child is given inconsistent boundaries. During one incident, staff asked them to turn off their games console. This escalated, the child climbed through a window and left the home. Staff contacted the on-call manager for advice. The manager advised staff to allow the child to play on their games console.

Some staff help the child to understand their health needs. They carry out creative key work with them which will help them to better understand their feelings and emotions.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

At the time of the inspection, the registered manager had been absent from work for 4 weeks. They have submitted their resignation and are working their notice. Leaders have recruited a new experienced manager who started work at the home during the inspection. The responsible individual was not present for the complete duration of the inspection.

The arrangements for monitoring the quality of care the child receives are poor. The registered manager has no regular monitoring systems in place. The responsible individual recently completed a thorough audit. This identifies many actions to improve the care the child receives, including monitoring administration and recording of medication.

Staff do not receive training relevant to the child's needs. Staff do not have the skills to care for the child, who has complex needs. Senior managers have arranged training for staff in relation to the child's diagnosis. However, this is for one hour, which is insufficient given the complexity of the child's needs.

Staff do not feel safe working in the home. They feel unsupported. New staff do not receive an in-depth induction before they start working in the home. Recently, a new member of staff arrived to start work in the home, and no-one had been informed. Furthermore, the manager had not assured themselves that this staff member was safe to work with children. For example, they had not verified why they had left their previous employment where they had worked with children and vulnerable adults.

Leaders and managers are aware of some of the areas for development in the home. They have formulated a detailed action plan. They have also employed an external consultant to assist them in making improvements.

Staff have recently begun to receive regular supervision. This will help them to reflect on their practice and to develop their skills.

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— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; protect and promote each child's welfare; treat each child with dignity and respect; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect; provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; provide to children personal items that are appropriate for their age and understanding; and ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—	14 January 2025

meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1) (a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(viii)(c)(i)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff are skilled to provide care to children, in line with the home's statement of purpose. They must ensure that staff understand children's experiences of trauma and how this has impacted on them. The registered person must ensure that children are provided with adequate clothing for school. They must also ensure that repairs to the home environment are completed in a timely manner.	
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— develop positive relationships with them; engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare; help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child; regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))	14 January 2025

In particular, the registered person must ensure that regular consultation with children takes place about their experiences living in the home, including after incidents. The registered person must ensure that children are heard and understood.	
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— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child’s relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies; that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff protect children from harm. They must understand their roles and responsibilities to protect children and take action to prevent children from being harmed. The registered person must ensure that children’s risk assessments contain accurate information about known risks and clear guidance for staff to follow to keep children safe. This must include when children spend time with their family and when they spend time in the community.	14 January 2025

The registered person must ensure that they speak to all children living in the home after incidents occur, to ascertain their views, wishes and feelings. They must ensure that children's experiences are listened to, and that action is taken to ensure they are adequately supported.	
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 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 has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; 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 child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and 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)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(ii)(h))	14 January 2025

In particular, the registered person must ensure that there is effective management oversight of the home. They must ensure that the quality of care children receive is continuously monitored. This includes senior oversight of children's care plans and how they are being implemented and monitored by the manager and staff. The registered person must develop effective monitoring and review systems. They must ensure that staff understand the quality of care to be provided to children and their experiences, and take swift action to address any identified shortfalls. The registered person must ensure that staff receive adequate training which equips them with the skills to meet the needs of the children they care for. They must ensure that the effectiveness of training in staff practice is monitored and evaluated.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose; that arrangements are in place to ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and that each child's relevant plans are followed; that the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plans is requested, if	14 January 2025

the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child's needs. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(d)(f)(i)) In particular, children's needs must be thoroughly considered before they move into the home, along with the stability and size of the staff team and their skills.	
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 keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. 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— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of 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 name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;	14 January 2025

within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—

has spoken to the user about the measure; and

has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and

within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.

(Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (2)

(3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))

The registered person must ensure that they review their policy on responding to and managing children's behaviour. They must ensure a consistent approach and that this is in line with the needs of the children they intend to care for.

The registered person must ensure that all staff receive training to enable them to have the skills to safely respond to and manage children's behaviour. This includes implementing any measure of control, discipline or restraint. The registered person must ensure that accurate records of such measures are kept. They must ensure they develop effective systems to monitor how staff respond to children.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that when recruiting staff, references are verified, in particular when staff have previously worked with children and vulnerable adults. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: 2786471

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

Registered provider address: Council House, Manor Square, Solihull, B91 3PX

Responsible individual: Chantelle Bevan

Registered manager: Mark Gamble

Inspectors

Sarah Berry, Social Care Inspector
Nurnahar Bhuniya, Social Care Inspector

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