

2794799

Registered provider: Leeds City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a local authority.

The home and manager registered with Ofsted in August 2024.

The home can provide care for up to two children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

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

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 February 2025

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.

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 serious shortfalls in relation to the protection of children and in leadership and management that have limited the overall experiences and progress for the children.

Significant delays in requesting maintenance repairs mean that damage to the home is not addressed promptly. For example, one child's bedroom window had been boarded up for over two weeks before being repaired during the inspection. Leaving essential repairs unresolved for such an extended period fails to promote a sense of belonging and pride for the children in their home.

While interventions and direct work are being carried out with the children, not all topics are appropriately tailored to meet their individual needs. This stems from a lack of clear guidance and support for staff, rather than any reluctance or lack of commitment to providing the best possible care for the children.

Staff actions do not effectively promote positive relationships between the children in the home. While staff understand restorative principles, children are not sufficiently supported to feel emotionally safe to engage in these approaches successfully.

Both children were spoken with and said that they have positive relationships with staff. Each child has at least one trusted adult they feel comfortable confiding in about any worries or concerns they have.

One child has been supported to return to their chosen school and speaks positively about their education. Another child, who is yet to have an identified education placement, is being supported by staff to understand the importance of a healthy daily routine and an understanding of the importance of learning.

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

Children do not always feel safe in the home. A lack of clear guidance for staff has resulted in inappropriate plans being implemented to support children's safety. While staff act with good intentions, insufficient staffing levels limit their ability to respond effectively. During times of crisis, only one child can be supported at a time, leaving others feeling unsafe and vulnerable.

Bedroom door alarms are used at night with the intention of helping children feel safer. However, this level of surveillance is inappropriate and does not align with good practice. Monitoring equipment, including door alarms, is being used as a substitute for sufficient staffing, rather than as a proportionate safeguarding measure.

Behaviour management plans are not effective in meeting children's individual needs. For example, one child's plan is based on financial incentives, despite money being a

known trigger for them. The use of financial deductions functions as a sanction and measure of control for the child, rather than a constructive behaviour management strategy. This is limiting its effectiveness in supporting positive change.

Children are supported to understand how to keep themselves safe when out in the community. For one child with a specific safety plan, staff have helped them to understand the plan and provided guidance on how to navigate and manage their own safety effectively.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leadership and management oversight is ineffective and, at times, absent, resulting in serious shortfalls in safeguarding children. Additionally, the manager has not received adequate support from senior leaders, further impacting the home's ability to ensure children's safety and well-being.

Leaders and managers do not have sufficient oversight of children's experiences. For example, one child expressed concerns during direct work about not feeling safe in the home, the manager did not thoroughly investigate the reasons behind these concerns or take appropriate action to address them. This lack of scrutiny and response has failed to support the child in feeling safe.

Staff have expressed feeling disempowered at times and reported that communication within the home was previously very poor. While they acknowledge recent improvements, they recognise that further progress is still needed.

Staff are unclear on key processes, including the role of on-call managers and the actions required for missing-from-home incidents. Additionally, not all staff feel safe when only one member of staff is on shift at night, highlighting concerns around staffing levels, staff guidance and support.

The manager has not consistently notified Ofsted or other safeguarding agencies of serious incidents in the home. For example, incidents involving police attendance, significant property damage, and concerns about knives have not always been reported. This lack of notification prevents the regulator from effectively monitoring and evaluating the safety and well-being of children in the home.

There have been recent improvements in staff supervision sessions, providing opportunities for staff to reflect on events within the home. This positive change has helped staff feel more supported, creating an environment where they feel comfortable speaking out and being open and honest.

In response to the inspection findings, senior leaders have implemented an immediate action plan to address concerns regarding insufficient staffing and the completion of essential repairs in the home.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 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— 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; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and 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; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))vi)(b)(d))	13 April 2025
* 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	13 April 2025

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 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)(d)(e)(f)(g)(ii)(h))	
* The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child’s relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(c))	13 April 2025
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the	30 April 2025

registered person to— ensure that staff— provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. (Regulation 6 (1) (2)(b)(vii))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(e))	30 April 2025

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: 2794799

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Merrion House, Merion Centre Leeds LS2 8LX

Responsible individual: Benjamin Finley

Registered manager: Christopher Simpson

Inspector

Jo Birtwhistle, Social Care Inspector

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