

SC032475

Registered provider: Trafford Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a local authority. The home provides care for up to five children who may have social and emotional difficulties or a learning disability.

At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2023.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 April 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 31 October 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection:

At an assurance inspection on 30 January 2024, serious and widespread concerns were identified in relation to the care and protection of children. A notice to urgently vary the conditions of registration from five children to three children was issued. A compliance notice was issued under regulation 12 (the protection of children standard).

At a monitoring visit on 12 February 2024, it was decided that the compliance notice had been met. The emergency variation remained in place.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/10/2023	Full	Good
06/12/2022	Full	Good
12/10/2021	Full	Good
21/01/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are making positive progress because of the care that they are receiving. Children have positive relationships with the staff who care for them.

Staff understand the importance of building positive relationships with the children they care for. Following time off work, one staff member planned a day out with a child on their return, exploring the countryside. This reinforced to the child that the member of staff valued spending time with them.

All children are accessing education and making progress from their individual starting points. Staff advocate strongly for children to ensure that their education plans meet their individual needs. For one child, this has meant them re-engaging with education following a long period of absence.

One child is being supported to prepare for adulthood. Staff work closely with partner agencies, which means that the child feels well supported and prepared for moving to more independent living. In addition, the child was able to secure their first job, following support and encouragement from staff to attend a workplace taster day. Staff said how proud and excited they were for the child's future.

Staff understand the importance of children spending time with family. One child has regular visits from their family and their new pet dog. This is supporting plans for the child to return to the care of their parents. Staff ensure that important information is shared with children's families, which supports positive relationships.

Staff have identified that one child struggles to engage with health services. However, efforts to support the child to engage are not always reflected in records. This means strategies are not always reviewed and adapted to ensure that they are in line with the child's needs. The child's records contain incorrect information about their additional health needs. This was not identified by staff or the registered manager.

Children have monthly house meetings where they can discuss issues and their wishes and feelings regarding the care they receive. The registered manager responds to children's requests in writing, however, this is not always done in a timely manner. This means that children have not always had responses to their requests by the time of the next house meeting and they cannot see the results of their views being listened to and acted on.

The registered manager has taken significant action to complete repairs that are needed in the home. Additional items have been purchased to provide a more homely environment. However, the home's windows remain in poor condition and a request for these to be replaced has not been acted on by senior leaders. This means that staff and children have to prop windows open as they do not open unaided.

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

Staff take effective action to safeguard the children. Risks to the children are known and understood by staff caring for them.

Staff work closely with a wide range of agencies to ensure that children are supported to stay safe. The manager arranged with one agency for children to take part in virtual reality training around the risks of knife crime. This has supported children to gain a greater understanding of the risks of knife crime and how to stay safe.

Senior leaders have arranged for staff to have ongoing work with and support from mental health professionals. Staff are supported to explore and take additional advice on strategies to keep children safe. This has supported one child to explore, understand and question medication for their additional needs. The child has subsequently been able to make informed decisions about their medication use.

Staff have taken swift action to ensure that when new risks are identified, information is gathered and shared with partner agencies to ensure that children can be kept safe. Safety plans are completed collaboratively, which ensures that all agencies are aware of their responsibilities in keeping children safe. External professionals said that they are kept updated with ongoing safeguarding concerns.

Children have personal emergency evacuation plans, due to ongoing concerns around children smoking and vaping in the home. Incentives and clear boundaries mean two children have acknowledged the risks and now adhere to the house rules. Staff understand the expectations on them when children choose to smoke in the home. The registered manager has worked with fire services to ensure additional safety measures are in place, such as changing the fire alarm's sensitivity. While these additional measures are not reflected in children's plans, this has not impacted on the staff's ability to take effective action to reduce the risks to children.

The children's risk assessments and plans are regularly reviewed. However, not all changes made reflect the children's current circumstances. Some risk assessments have conflicting and out-of-date information in them.

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

In addition to the registered manager, the leadership team consists of two Senior Assistants, a Service Manager who is also the responsible individual and a Head of Service Provider Services. The leadership team is working to improve the home and meet the needs of the children currently living in the home. Despite this, shortfalls identified at the last inspections have not been fully addressed.

Staff have completed a wide range of training. However, the registered manager does not have clear oversight of the training records of all staff. Personal training files have been started for some staff, but this practice is not fully embedded.

When the registered manager has identified training to support staff to understand new risks to children, a date for completion has not been set. This means staff are not being upskilled in a timely manner to meet the current needs of children living in the home.

Regular agency staff are used to ensure adequate staffing of the home. However, they are not offered regular supervision like that given to permanent members of the team. This means that they do not have the opportunity to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children in their care.

The registered manager knows the children in the home well and is respected by the staff. However, the registered manager lacks oversight of many aspects of the home. This is further impacted by the number of inconsistencies and poor record-keeping. Children's documents are not accurate and are not kept up to date. The registered manager acknowledges the need to delegate more tasks to the management team to improve oversight of the home.

Team meetings are used to identify the needs of the children and how to support them to progress. These meetings ensure that staff are aware of any changes to children's plans.

At the time of the inspection, the home's statement of purpose was not up to date or accurate. Steps were taken to review this during the inspection, however, the new admission policy remains under review by senior leaders.

Following the inspection, the home's emergency variation was reviewed and lifted.

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 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; 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— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; 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)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h))	11 August 2024
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; and	11 August 2024

are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b))	
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 requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— provide personalised care that meets each child’s needs, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans, taking account of the child’s background. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iv)) This specifically relates to ensuring health records contain factual and up-to-date information, including support offered to children to attend health appointments.	11 July 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should have systems in place so that all staff, including agency staff, receive supervision of their practice which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that children’s wishes and feeling are captured in records. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted on. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 22, paragraph 4.11)
- The registered person should ensure that children’s homes look cared for and provide a homely environment for children to live in. This specifically relates to the replacement of windows. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: SC032475

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Trafford Borough Council

Registered provider address: Town Hall, Talbot Road, Stretford, Manchester M32 0TH

Responsible individual: Sally Rimmer

Registered manager: Adam Fletcher

Inspector

Alexandra Pearson, 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
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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