

SC032475

Registered provider: Trafford Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties or learning disabilities. It is owned and managed by a local authority.

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 December 2017

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 **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 20 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Staff work consistently with young people, using the Nurtured Heart approach. Positive relationships formed between the staff and young people have led to

some good outcomes for young people.

- Young people said that they are happy and safe, and enjoy living at this home.
- A key strength of the home is the value that staff place on young people's education. Staff work well with educational professionals to support young people's attendance in school and participation in education.
- Young people live in a healthy environment where their physical, emotional and psychological health is well promoted.
- Individual risk assessments and safety plans identify known risks to young people's safety and welfare, including risks associated with dangerous behaviour such as the misuse of alcohol and illicit substances, and a history of self-harm.
- Good partnership working ensures a multi-agency approach to protecting young people.
- The home is managed by an experienced and qualified registered manager, who is supported by a stable and committed staff team.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Decisions regarding placements to the home have not always been sound. For example, a young person was admitted to the home despite the registered manager informing senior managers that the home could not meet the young person's needs.
- Care practice does not consistently demonstrate that the home always acts as a good parent would. For example, most days, some young people are allowed to go across the borough to meet friends who may be unknown to staff.
- Some young people have been admitted to the home without key documents such as local authority care plans and an impact risk assessment.
- There are sufficient staff during the day. However, managers need to review staffing sufficiency because some staff are doing waking nights following on from working an afternoon shift. This is because additional staff are required at night to support a young person's significant emotional and psychological needs.
- All staff are suitably qualified. However, there is no workforce development plan to demonstrate what training staff have completed, or what training needs have been identified. In addition, records made it difficult to see what training has been updated, including first aid and Team-Teach.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12/12/2016	Full	Outstanding
11/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13/01/2016	Full	Outstanding

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, 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 registered person must ensure that the home's day-to-day arrangements are arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from potential harm. (Regulation 12 (2)(b))	28/02/2018
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— (a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and (b) promotes their welfare. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— (c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (d) ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child. (Regulation 13)	28/02/2018
The registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 16)	28/02/2018
The registered person must ensure that, at all times, at least one person on duty at the home has a suitable first aid qualification. (Regulation 31 (2)(a))	28/02/2018

Recommendations

- Ensure that staff are alert to the possibility that children may be at risk from relationships including with other children, and they therefore should take appropriate steps to protect a child. Specifically, this is regarding friendships in the community. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.13)
- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should detail the experience and qualifications of staff, any further training required and agreed timescales for staff to achieve induction, probation

and any core training (such as safeguarding, health and safety and mandatory qualifications). ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control and discipline are fully recorded and subject to regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)
- The registered person must challenge (under regulation 5(c)) any placing authority who asks them to accept a child in the absence of a complete and current relevant plan, as the expectation that a placement of a child without the necessary information would go ahead (in circumstances other than an emergency) is inadequate in relation to their role. It is essential that homes understand what will be required of them before they accept responsibility for a child's placement, to avoid disruption and instability for the child in future and for other children in the home. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.5)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, seven young people have been admitted to the home. A number of the young people have moved in at short notice as an emergency. Of the four young people currently living at the home, two have lived here for just over two years. The other two young people are relatively new admissions. Decisions regarding placements to the home have not always been sound. For example, a young person was admitted to the home despite the registered manager informing senior managers that the home could not meet the young person's needs. One young person who had lived at the home for almost two years recently moved on. The home supported his transition well, and he has remained in contact with staff.

Young people said that they are happy and safe, and enjoy living at this home. One young person said, 'I like it. The staff are nice. It's a good place.' Another young person said, 'They look after us well. The best thing is the staff are nice.' A further comment included, 'Since coming to live here I've got good routines. It's a good place.' A professional said, 'Staff here are amazing. They go above and beyond. They invest time in [name of young person] and have really built a good relationship with her. She sees it

as her home and she trusts them. I believe she is only here still because of the staff.'

Staff work to the Nurtured Heart approach. Positive relationships formed between the staff and young people have led to some good outcomes for young people. However, in recent months some relationships within the home have come under strain. Contributing factors include an increase in some young people's risk-taking behaviours. This has had a negative impact on the effectiveness of some of the management strategies and, at times, on the group dynamics.

A key strength of the home is the value that staff place on young people's education. Staff work well with educational professionals to support young people's attendance at school and participation in education. For example, one young person's attendance at school has increased from 25% to 100% since moving to the home. Young people who are not currently doing any education or training are being encouraged to do so, with good effect, which improves their future life chances. A placing social worker said, 'We had a PEP [personal education plan] meeting last week. It was lovely. [Name of young person] is doing brilliantly. Fabulous [school] attendance.'

Young people live in a healthy environment where their physical, emotional and psychological health is well promoted. Young people whose mental health is at risk receive the mental health support they need. Staff are working directly with a young person who is at risk from self-injurious behaviour, which can be potentially life-threatening. Although the staff have had some training in relation to self-injurious behaviour, they have not had any specific training in relation to supporting a young person who is at risk by cutting. Staff reported that balancing the highly complex needs of this young person is, at times, extremely challenging. While this has not affected their care of the young people, it has impacted on morale.

A number of young people smoke cigarettes, use illicit drugs and alcohol. This includes some young people who did not do so before coming to live at the home. Staff ensure that the young people have access to a range of specialist services in order to help them overcome these patterns of negative behaviour. However, there is little evidence of young people reducing these behaviours.

The manager and staff consult with the young people regularly. Young people's views are sought through direct key-work sessions and daily chats. Young people are clear about how to make a complaint. There has been one complaint made since the last inspection. Records show that this was taken seriously and appropriately addressed.

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

Individual risk assessments and safety plans identify known risks to young people's safety and welfare, including risks associated with dangerous behaviour such as the misuse of alcohol and illicit substances, and a history of self-harm. Together, they provide staff with good guidance about how to recognise precursors to dangerous risk-taking behaviour and what action to take to avert or mitigate the risk. This is successful

in reducing risks to children's safety. Through maintaining close supervision of young people known to self-harm, the home ensures that young people receive treatment quickly, thus preventing serious incidents from threatening their lives.

Young people said that they feel safe in the home and that they can confidently approach staff with any worries, knowing staff will do all they can to help them. For example, one young person explained: 'I trust them a lot. If you want to say something, you can say it to anyone.'

Bullying is immediately addressed; and action taken promotes better relationships between young people and a better understanding of the impact of bullying behaviour.

Young people who go missing from the home are mostly protected in line with agreed individual protocols. Staff attempt to maintain phone contact with those who are unsupervised in the community, and search for them if they fail to return on time, reporting them to the police within pre-set, short timeframes. This promotes their swift, safe return. However, this practice is undermined on occasions, or is not sufficiently robust to demonstrate that the home always acts as a good parent would. For example, most days, some young people are allowed to go across the borough to meet friends who may be unknown to staff, with a return time of 10pm. Despite their vulnerability, they are expected to return on public transport, and staffing levels do not allow for staff to go and collect them, or search for them if they fail to return on time. Staff do not always ensure that young people have a working mobile phone with them before they go out. This means that young people who may be in a dangerous situation cannot call home for support.

One young person spoke about how cold it can be when he's outside all the time and what he does to get warm. Another frequently returns to the home under the influence of illicit substances, and in a very low mood. Not enough is done to engage young people fully in the life of the home and deter them from going out every evening, irrespective of the weather, through the provision of inviting and fun activities in the evenings.

Good partnership working ensures a multi-agency approach to protecting young people. Those who are known to be at risk of exploitation receive good guidance from the staff team as well as a service from specialist health and/or safeguarding professionals. This supports them to develop the knowledge and resilience to recognise harmful situations and keep themselves safe. There is ongoing work with young people who have low self-esteem and are easily led. The home notifies relevant people, including Ofsted, when serious incidents threaten a young person's safety. There are no concerns about the way the home manages these incidents.

Young people know the rules of the home and said that staff are consistent in their application of boundaries. Positive behaviour management strategies effectively reduce the level of challenging behaviour. Restraint is used infrequently and only to prevent harm to the young person or others. Each young person has an individualised incentive scheme and is rewarded for achieving daily goals, for example engaging with education

or attending to their personal hygiene. Rewards include the provision of a television in a young person's bedroom, or outings with staff. The home does not maintain records that demonstrate whether a young person has achieved the reward. This means it cannot demonstrate how effective these measures of control are.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by an experienced and qualified registered manager, who is supported by a stable and committed staff team. The manager acknowledged that they have been through a very challenging time this last year. Staff spoken to demonstrated a real commitment to their role, but also expressed their concerns in managing challenging and risky situations.

This inspection has found shortfalls in some aspects of care planning. For example, some young people have been admitted to the home without key documents such as local authority care plans and an impact risk assessment. These shortfalls potentially undermine young people's welfare and safety.

A young person who has complex mental health needs resides at the home. The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) is concerned that a full mental health assessment has not been completed. The inspectors found that the local authority are following the advice of mental health professionals, including an independent psychologist. However, the young person has, on occasion, stated that their overwhelming mental health needs are not being properly addressed and that they are not being listened to by the professionals. While the home is encouraging the young person to engage with the mental health support services being offered, and did request a change in CAMHS worker in line with the young person's wishes, the home is not challenging other professionals to ensure the young person can access the sort of help that they would find more beneficial.

The statement of purpose states that the registered manager, or senior member of staff on duty in the absence of the registered manager, will complete an impact risk assessment to determine if a new admission can be accepted. However, this is not always the case. On one occasion, a young person was placed back at the home against the registered manager's decision because he was directed by senior managers to do so. This potentially undermines his management of the home and decisions about the suitability of placements.

There are sufficient staff on duty during the day. However, managers need to review staffing sufficiency because some staff are doing waking nights following on from working an afternoon shift. This is because additional staff are required at night to support a young person's significant emotional and psychological needs.

All staff are suitably qualified. They have access to a number of training opportunities. Most recently, they have completed a mentalization training programme. However, there is no workforce development plan to demonstrate what training staff have completed, or

what training needs have been identified. In addition, records made it difficult to see what training has been updated, including first aid and Team-Teach.

Staff have regular supervision, but records do not demonstrate that they are given the opportunity to reflect on and improve practice, instead sessions are task-led. Furthermore, attendance at the team meetings is variable. This means that staff are not all hearing the same messages about consistent ways to manage the young people.

Two requirements were made at the last inspection. One has been met in relation to complaints. However, the requirement made about keeping young people safe has not sufficiently been addressed and is repeated. A recommendation made at the last inspection has not been fully met. This is because the staff cannot demonstrate that they are clear on where young people go during the evening or who they are mixing with.

The manager is committed to providing young people with high-quality care. He has a good understanding of the progress that young people make. The manager and staff seek to build effective working relationships with local partners and agencies to secure positive outcomes for young people.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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 address: Trafford Council, Ground Floor, Town Hall, Talbot Road, Stretford, Manchester M32 0TH

Responsible individual: Sally Rimmer

Registered manager: Paul Maguire

Inspectors

Michelle Bacon, social care inspector
Sharon Lloyd, social care inspector

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