

SC032475

Registered provider: Trafford Borough Council

Assurance 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. It provides care for up to five children who may have social and emotional difficulties and/or a learning disability.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2023.

Inspection date: 30 January 2024

Date of last inspection: 31 October 2023

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.

The 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

We identified widespread concerns in relation to the care and protection of children at this assurance inspection.

This visit took place to consider specific concerns that were notified to Ofsted.

Since the last inspection, two children have moved out of the home and four children have moved in. Three of these children moved into the home under emergency arrangements. Managers have not consistently considered the impact on the children already living at the home, in line with the home's statement of purpose. Managers report that senior leaders did not listen to their concerns about the needs of the children who were identified to be placed together in the home.

There have been three known incidents of children setting fires in the home. However, during the inspection, remnants of ash were found in four of the children's bedrooms, indicating that something had been burned. Staff were not able to provide an explanation for this. Children also regularly choose not to participate in fire drills. Managers have failed to implement clear strategies for staff to follow to reduce these risks. Limited follow-up action has been taken to help children understand the potential risk from fire setting.

Not all staff have completed physical intervention and administration of medication training. This means that some staff do not have the required skills to meet the needs of all of the children currently living in the home.

The administration of controlled medication for one child was not provided in accordance with the provider's own policy. Record-keeping is poor, and the staff were unable to confirm if a child's medication had been administered. Managers and staff do not have a clear understanding of medication process and procedures and the potential impact on children.

When children go missing from home, staff do not always take effective action in line with children's missing-from-home risk assessments. When children return home under the influence of substances, staff do not take action to ensure that children's safety is prioritised. This leaves children at risk.

On one occasion, a bladed weapon was found in a child's bedroom. The registered manager failed to work with the local authority social worker to assess this risk or fully consider the actions required to keep the child and others safe.

Leaders and managers do not take effective action in response to incidents of bullying. One child has experienced significant bullying, including reports that items of clothing have been taken from their bedroom by children and being physically assaulted. Not all staff understand the bullying policy or what action should be taken to address incidents of bullying.

Not all serious incidents have been notified to Ofsted. This means that Ofsted is unable to scrutinise information in a timely manner to ensure that children are kept safe.

When bedroom searches are undertaken, staff do not capture the views of children and whether they have consented to the room search. This is a missed opportunity to ensure that children understand the reasons for room searches being conducted.

During the inspection, the bathroom door was found to be locked. This denies children access to all areas of their home. This is not kept under review by managers, and children's plans do not identify any safeguarding concerns that necessitate this limitation.

Some areas of the home environment are unsafe, including several windows throughout the home that were broken. Furthermore, the home is not well maintained, and children's bedrooms are unclean and do not have sufficient bedding. This does not provide a homely environment for the children to live in.

Due to the serious and widespread concerns identified during this inspection, notice to urgently vary the conditions of registration from five children to three children has been issued. A compliance notice under regulation 12, the protection of children standard, has also been issued.

The requirement previously issued under regulation 36 was not met, and so it is restated.

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

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; 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;	11 March 2024

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; and that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(d)(e))	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— 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 have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of 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— 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 and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(c)(e)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h))	11 March 2024
The registered person must ensure that— children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises—	11 March 2024

is kept under review and, if necessary, revised. (Regulation 21 (b)(c)(iii))	
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular the registered person must ensure that— medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child; and a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(b)(c))	11 March 2024
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home; make arrangements for persons working at the home to receive suitable training in fire prevention; and ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. (Regulation 25 (a)(c)(d))	11 March 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 are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)) This is a repeat requirement.	11 March 2024
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; and	11 March 2024

there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(e))	
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*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that any child who has been held is given the opportunity to express their feelings about their experience, ideally within 24 hours of the physical intervention. In some cases, children may need longer to work through their feelings, so a record that the child has talked about their feelings should be made no longer than five days after the physical intervention. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.60)

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

Inspectors

Alexandra Pearson, Social Care Inspector
Sally Griffiths, Social Care Inspector

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