

SC032496

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 six children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, the home was providing care for five children.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2017.

Inspection date: 12 March 2024

Date of last inspection: 20 September 2023

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has 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 serious concerns in relation to the care and protection of children at this assurance inspection.

Since the last inspection, two children have moved out of the home and four children have moved into the home. Two of these children moved into the home under emergency arrangements at night. Senior Leaders and the registered manager have differing views for the criteria of emergency placements for children. This means that plans for children moving into the home are inconsistent and not child-centred.

The registered manager has carried out risk assessments to identify whether the staff team can manage the known risks of all the children effectively should they live together. Some risk assessments have identified that it is not suitable for children to move into the home. However, due to wider placement sufficiency issues, the registered manager has been instructed to move some children into the home contrary to these assessments. These decisions are not recorded.

The detrimental impact of this decision-making on the children living in the home has been significant. Placing children where the risk assessment identifies that the staff cannot meet the child's needs or keep all the children safe has put children at risk of harm.

During the inspection, one child said that they did not feel safe and had witnessed another child self-harming. On a separate occasion, another child rang an ambulance after witnessing a child self-harming. No additional support was put in place for the children who witnessed these incidents.

One child was placed in the home despite the home not having sufficient levels of staffing to keep the child safe. This led to excessive use of agency staff and has directly impacted recording of significant incidents. Recording of some incidents is poor and does not contain any clear details of the incident or the staff's response. This prevents the registered manager from evaluating and monitoring all incidents effectively.

The registered manager has ensured that mental health professionals have had input into one child's safety plan. However, staff are not signing records to say that they have read and understood these. This means that it is not clear if staff understand the child's risks and what action they need to take to keep children safe.

Training for staff to meet a child's specific needs was identified in October 2023. However, this has not yet been undertaken. A further child then moved into the home, which increased the identified risks further.

Three children remained in bed throughout the day of the inspection. This is because they had been kept up all night due to ongoing incidents throughout the night. This directly impacted children's ability to engage in their education.

When one child made an allegation, this was not referred to the local authority designated officer and safeguarding procedures were not followed. Ofsted was not notified of this incident. This means that Ofsted is unable to scrutinise information in a timely manner to ensure that children are kept safe.

During the inspection, the provider acted to reduce the likelihood of a serious safeguarding incident occurring in the home. They also made immediate changes to ensure that the children were safe. Senior leaders from the local authority also offered assurances about the number of children who would be living in the home and further actions that they intended to take. These assurances prevented Ofsted from taking higher enforcement action.

The requirements previously issued under regulations 12 and 13 have not been met and are restated.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/09/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
12/09/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
08/06/2022	Full	Inadequate
20/01/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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; 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; that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(e))	23 April 2024

This is a repeat requirement.	
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 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; 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)(b) (2)(a)(b)(d)(f)(g)(ii)(h)) This is a repeat requirement.	23 April 2024
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; and there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)(e))	23 April 2024

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC032496

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: Alicia Cooper

Inspector

Alexandra Pearson, Social Care Inspector

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