

SC032496

Registered provider: Trafford Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a local authority and provides care for up to six children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2017.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 September 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 12 September 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/09/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
08/06/2022	Full	Inadequate
20/01/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
27/07/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

There are currently three children living at the home. The children have made good progress in many aspects of their lives, but staff have not always taken effective action to keep children safe.

Children speak positively about their relationships with the staff. Staff listen to children's wishes and feelings and effectively advocate their views to wider agencies when care planning.

When children move in to the home and are unable to continue to access their existing education, staff take proactive step to identify suitable education provision. Staff liaise with schools, colleges and the virtual school head to ensure that children's educational needs are met.

Children are in good health. Staff identify children's additional health needs and ensure that children receive the support needed to progress. During the inspection, children were given the opportunity to access a sexual health drop in discussion with a nurse. This allows children to learn and make informed decision around their sexual health needs.

Staff have developed successful relationships with health professionals in the local area. This means that children are quickly signposted to additional services. Therefore, children feel well supported. One child is accessing a weekly local mental health youth group, which is supporting their mental health needs.

When children are new to the home, they are given a welcome basket and a child-friendly guide. There is a clear process in place to ensure that staff support children with any anxieties that they may have from moving in to the home. For one child, this involved supporting them to visit relatives in hospital after they expressed their worries.

The home is decorated to a high standard. Children have picked wall art that is displayed throughout the home. Children's bedrooms are clean and personalised. The home has a gym, which children are encouraged and supported to use.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

In most instances, risks are identified and understood by staff. Despite this, strategies to keep two children safe while living together were not followed. This compromised the safety of the children.

Children frequently go missing from home. Staff respond appropriately when children initially go missing and take action to locate and return the children. However, the plans to manage children who remain missing overnight are less-well established. This means that effective action is not always taken when children are at their most vulnerable.

Children have trusted relationships with staff in the home. This means that staff have been able to work with children to understand the risk of substance use. One child has engaged with specialist services and their substance use has reduced.

Staff understand children's lived experiences. They provide a nurturing response when children display behaviours due to being upset or angry. Physical intervention is only used to keep children and those around them safe.

When allegations are made, these are shared with appropriate agencies and managed in line with statutory guidance. Support is given to both the person making the allegation and the person who has been subject to the allegation.

Managers have not ensured that all steps have been taken to follow statutory guidance on safer recruitment. Records show that attempts have not been made to verify one staff member's references.

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

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced. The manager is child focused in her approach and works hard to help children to progress. When speaking to children, they all identified her as a key person who they could go to for support. One child said, 'I love her to bits'.

The manager is a strong advocate for children and has challenged the local authority when children do not agree with their care planning arrangements. This means that children feel valued and listen to.

The manager challenged decisions made by senior leaders when she identified risks of children living together. Despite this, action was not taken to ensure that additional safeguarding measures were put in place to keep children safe.

Managers have good oversight of many areas of the home. However, managers have not recognised when aspects of safety plans are weak and could be strengthened to keep children safe.

Staff feel well supported and receive good-quality supervision. When managers have identified concerns around staff not following safety plans, this has not been addressed. This means that staff have not been supported to learn from mistakes.

When changes are made to the staff rota, action is not taken to ensure that they are legible. This means that it is not clear which staff have been working in the home.

The manager has ensured that staff have had additional training to meet the needs of children who move in to the home. For example, staff have completed additional training to support one child who had had suicidal thoughts.

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 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))	1 November 2023

1 November 2023

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))

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that a copy of the staff duty roster of persons working at the home is clear and legible. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- The registered person should ensure that when a person is employed who has previously worked in a position involving work with children or vulnerable adults, verification is obtained, so far as reasonably practicable, of the reason why the employment or position ended. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: SC032496

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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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