

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 and accommodation for up to six children or young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home uses the 'No Wrong Door' model and offers outreach support.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2017.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 25 February 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 July 2021

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: 4 September 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/09/2019	Full	Good
05/09/2018	Full	Good
26/06/2017	Full	Good
26/10/2016	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

The home has been using the 'No Wrong Door' model since October 2019. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this has not been fully implemented. Managers plan to relaunch the 'No Wrong Door' model by modelling practice from other authorities that have been successful.

Three children are resident in this home. The manager has improved the referral process for children coming to live in the home. This includes good matching of other children's needs. However, the manager has not considered the home's location area report as part of the process. As a result, she has not considered any potential risks and whether these would have any bearing on the suitability of the placement.

Children say that they feel happy and safe at this home. They speak about the good relationships that they have with each other and the staff team. The children are able to identify several members of staff who they can talk to if they have a concern. One child said, 'It is great. Staff really listen. I would recommend this home to other children.' The inspector viewed positive interactions between children and staff throughout the visit.

Staff have the necessary educational documents for the children. However, information has not been taken from these documents to form a plan of how to support the children. As a result, staff do not know what exams the children have taken, at what stage they are at academically or what their attendance is like. Further to this, children have secured placements at college but there is no information about what support they require at college.

Children have good access to a range of health services. For example, they receive extra support from external mental health professionals to help them with their emotions. However, the only information around this is the appointment records, which have not been fully completed with all the information required. Similarly, some children have outstanding immunisations but there is no record of how staff have followed these up. There is little information around the children's personal, physical, emotional, social or sexual health needs and how the staff are supporting the children in these areas.

On a positive note, children receive additional support from a speech and language therapist. The therapist has been able to help children who have difficulty processing information. Likewise, staff have written information to follow to support them in conversations with the children, for example keeping sentences short or giving children time to reflect and answer. A child told the inspector that this has helped them enormously.

Numerous documents are not signed by the author, the manager, the staff or the child's named social worker. This does not show that everyone agrees with the plans or that the staff are aware of any changes to the children's plans. Significantly, a child's local authority placement plan is unsigned, which contains permission for emergency medical treatment. This means that there could be a delay in receiving emergency treatment. Likewise, although children are making progress, there is little information on how this progress is achieved. Therefore, this does not show the child's journey throughout their stay at the home.

Members of staff work closely with the children, their parents, their family members and professionals so that they see each other regularly. This focus on positive family time means that important relationships are maintained and built on.

Preparation for semi-independence is a strong feature in the home. Children's life skills are assessed, and staff give them support to help them learn practical skills, such as budgeting, cooking and in maintenance. Children have bank accounts and have applied for jobs and been successful. As part of preparing children for adult life and their careers, the children have completed online training in first aid, food hygiene, and health and safety. They have certificates in these areas to show future employers. In addition to this, the child's key person remains involved in the child's future by visiting and offering additional support after they leave.

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

Children say that they feel safe, and that staff do their very best to safeguard them, including teaching them about risky or unsafe choices, such as unhealthy relationships. One child said, 'This is the safest that I have felt in a long time.'

Children's risk assessments and behaviour management plans highlight all known risks that are recorded in children's local authority documents. However, there is little information on the agreed strategies to use to de-escalate situations and there is no clear guidance for staff to follow if an incident occurs. Consequently, staff are not provided with clear guidance on safeguarding matters, which undermines continuity in the staff team's response to the children.

Children have been reported missing from this home. Some children have been missing for extended periods. The manager has not always informed Ofsted as part of the home's safeguarding process. This reduces the regulator's oversight. However, as part of the 'No Wrong Door' model, there is a police officer based at the home. She said, 'The staff are excellent at gaining soft intelligence from the children so that I can make enquires.' She continued to say that staff search the local area and continually try to find children, often doing this in their own time or travelling long distances. Return home interviews are completed by an independent person. As a result, children have been able to share the reasons of why they went missing and action has been taken to support the children. As a result, some children have significantly reduced their missing-from-home episodes.

There have been no safeguarding concerns to report to the safeguarding agencies. Staff demonstrate that they know the procedure to follow if a concern was to arise. All staff have received safeguarding training and additional supportive training, such as in child sexual exploitation, county lines and child criminal exploitation, which is refreshed regularly. This means that they have the knowledge to support children and can identify early signs of involvement.

Children say that the rewards and incentives systems in the home encourage them to be good. Likewise, children say that sanctions are fair and that they are given the opportunity to make things right.

Safe recruitment and health and safety practices at the home ensure that only the most suitable staff work at the home and that it is a safe place to live. Records show that children, staff and visitors are taken through the emergency evacuation procedure. Likewise, all visitors complete checks for COVID-19. This means that everyone is kept as safe as possible.

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

The manager returned to work in March 2021 after having a long period off sick. During this period, there was little oversight of the home by other managers or leaders. As a result, the manager says that she is aware that the home needs to improve, especially in the recordings around the children. She has identified most of the shortfalls through an audit of the home's documents. However, she is confident that the staff have focused on the children and their needs. Children confirmed this.

The manager has a good range of experience to care for the children and staff. She has a leadership and management qualification. The manager is supported by two senior residential care workers. All staff have a relevant childcare qualification. This means that children are cared for by a qualified, experienced and well-trained staff team.

The manager and staff have not received regular supervision. This does not ensure that they are given the opportunity to reflect on their practice. However, staff say that they feel supported, valued and motivated because they have daily handovers, discussions with the 'No Wrong Door' team and fortnightly team meetings. They say that they can share their knowledge and discuss the children in depth. The staff also benefit from a wealth of training and development opportunities to support their continuing professional development. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, most of the training has been completed online. However, face-to-face training events have resumed and further training is scheduled for the coming year.

The home's records do not show the support that staff have given to the children to help them to make progress. Further to this, the children's files are not easily accessible. This is because old or duplicate information is kept on the child's file. Numerous records have not been signed or dated by the author, the acting manager or the social worker. This does not ensure that there is good oversight of the records

or that all parties agree with the plans. The external monitoring is ineffective because the independent visitor has not highlighted these issues to the manager. As a result, the manager has not been able to address and take quick action to remedy these issues.

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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement; raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child's education or training provider and the child's placing authority; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of	28 September 2021

exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible; help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans; and that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)(b)) This relates specifically to ensuring that a child's education plan contains information from essential education documents that helps staff to support a child in their education.	
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans; understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding; take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child's health and well-being needs; and understand and develop skills to promote the child's well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))	28 September 2021

This relates specifically to ensuring that a child's health information is collated into a document that gives the child and staff a clear understanding about a child's personal, physical, emotional, social and sexual health.	
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 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(b)) This relates specifically to ensuring that children's risk assessments have clear guidance on the strategies for staff to use to de-escalate behaviour and clear actions to follow if an incident occurs.	28 September 2021
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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are located so that children are effectively safeguarded. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(c)) This relates specifically to ensuring that the location risk assessment is considered when accepting new admissions into the home.	28 September 2021
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)) Specifically, this relates to ensuring that the manager and staff receive regular supervision.	28 September 2021
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which—	28 September 2021

include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	28 September 2021
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires.	28 September 2021

The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether—

children are effectively safeguarded; and

the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being.

The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions.

(Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5))

This relates specifically to the independent visitor scrutinising the home's records and identifying shortfalls.

This also relates to the report being sent to Ofsted in a timely manner.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff encourage children to see the home's records as 'living documents' and support them to view and contribute to the records in a way that reflects their voice on a regular basis. This is specifically in relation to the structure of the children's files. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.19)
- The registered person should ensure that the home's records on each child represent a significant contribution to their life history. This is specifically in relation to ensuring that the steps taken by staff to secure good progress and outcomes are clearly recorded within the child's documents. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)

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: Trafford Council, Town Hall, Talbot Road,
Manchester, Trafford M32 0TH

Responsible individual: Sally Rimmer

Registered manager: Alicia Cooper

Inspector

Pam Nuckley, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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