

SC032496

Registered provider: Trafford Borough Council

Full 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, three children were living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2017.

Inspection dates: 30 April and 1 May 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 20 September 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

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

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children said that they feel safe living in the home and can identify trusted adults who they can talk to. Staff work hard to develop their understanding of children's individual needs to ensure that they provide good-quality care.

Staff are ambitious for children and support them with their education. Staff communicate effectively with staff at children's schools. When children do not engage in education, staff are strong advocates and work with education professionals to identify alternative provisions.

Children's independence is promoted in line with their individual stages of development. One child has successfully completed a programme to develop her independence skills and has moved from the home into semi-independent accommodation.

The registered manager has identified where the home is unable to meet children's needs and alternative provisions have been identified. One child moved on from the home when the registered manager recognised increasing levels of risk in the locality. Staff supported the child's transition to their new home.

Staff help children to meet their individual health needs and support them to attend medical appointments as necessary. The registered manager has recently sought further medical assessment for a child who has been displaying symptoms of concern. This is to ensure that any health issues are identified and monitored effectively.

Children are supported in developing and maintaining important relationships. Staff work closely with children's families to ensure that they are provided with regular updates and can spend time together where this is safe to do so.

Staff ensure that children have opportunities to engage in activities outside of the home. Children regularly go swimming and to the cinema, and one child has had horse riding lessons. Although staff seek children's views, it is not always recorded how these views are acted on. Staff do not regularly record children's views following one-to-one sessions. Therefore, it is not clear how the impact of this work is evaluated.

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

Staff have a good understanding of risks faced by children. Safeguarding procedures are in place, which means that staff know what to do when concerns arise. Staff respond well to children's risk-taking behaviours. The home identifies when external support is required, making appropriate referrals and ensuring that follow-up discussions take place when necessary.

The home receives support from a clinical psychologist who regularly attends the home. The psychologist works closely with staff and children to ensure that the children's therapeutic needs are understood. As a result, staff provide children with informed therapeutic care.

Praise and rewards are used regularly to promote positive behaviour. When consequences are used, these are restorative in nature and support children to make the right choices.

Staff have the skills to de-escalate situations effectively. Consequently, physical intervention is used as a last resort. Staff have held children only when there has been an identified risk to themselves or others. A child made a complaint when they did not feel that staff's hold of them was proportionate. The registered manager investigated this complaint thoroughly and found that the hold was necessary to keep the child safe. The child was kept fully informed of any decisions made and given explanations of how these had been reached.

The registered manager regularly considers and evaluates known and emerging risks by reviewing children's risk assessments. These assessments are clear and have subject-specific areas which provide staff with clear strategies to reduce risks for children. One child has received focused work in fire safety following an increase in risk-taking behaviours in this area. This work enhanced the child's understanding of the dangers of poor fire management and the impact of this on themselves and others.

Two children continue to be missing from the home on a frequent basis. The home has a clear missing-from-home protocol in place, which is understood and followed by staff. However, on one occasion, although there was significant liaison with family members and professionals, staff did not leave the home to actively search for the children. The registered manager has challenged this approach and a review with senior leaders is planned to discuss expectations of staff, specifically should children be reported missing during the night.

Staff respond well to incidents with effective and proportionate approaches that safeguard children. Despite this, some records of incidents are not consistent and do not provide sufficient detail.

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

The home is managed by a committed and experienced registered manager. Since the last inspection, the registered manager and senior leaders have developed action plans to meet identified shortfalls. These relate to the evaluation of risk of children moving into the home with the ability of staff to manage their needs. These plans are yet to be embedded. The home has not admitted any children since the last inspection and has temporarily closed the emergency beds until these plans are fully implemented.

Some members of staff are very experienced and new staff members are supported when working in the home. Due to staff sickness, there has been a high number of agency staff working in the home. The manager has sought to reduce number of non-permanent staff in recent months to ensure that there is consistency for children, although agency staff use is still required on occasion.

All members of staff have completed the provider's mandatory training. The registered manager has identified training that is reflective of the children's specific needs. The provider has recently agreed to fund this training, although a date is yet to be set for staff to attend.

Staff receive supportive and reflective supervision from the registered manager and senior team leader. The registered manager has a strong vision for the home, which is inclusive of staff development. She has also consulted with children in plans for the development of the outside space of the home. Plans for a sensory garden are currently in place and children have had input into these plans.

Staff say that they feel supported by the registered manager and have a positive experience of working in the home. Team meetings take place on a regular basis. Staff are engaged in the process and their views are valued.

The registered manager and staff have developed positive working relationships with children's families and external agencies. Professionals working with children in the home speak positively about the quality of care offered by staff to the children.

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 children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare; help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child; regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care. (Regulation 7 (1)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that children's views are recorded following key-work sessions to ensure that the impact of the work carried out and any further areas for support are identified.	2 July 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;	2 July 2024

are kept up to date; and

are signed and dated by the author of each entry.
(Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))

Specifically, the registered person must ensure that daily records include detailed information about any incidents and events that occur.

Recommendation

- The registered person should specify clear, detailed procedures to be followed and the roles and responsibilities of staff when a child is missing from care and ensure that these are consistently followed by all staff. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.28)

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

Carrie Mayes, Social Care Inspector

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