

SC033657

Registered provider: Leeds City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides care and support for up to five children aged between 15 and 17 years old.

The aim of the home is to develop the children's independence skills in preparation for moving on to supported accommodation or living independently.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2018.

The inspector spoke to one of the four children who were living in the home at the time of the inspection. Positive interactions between the children and the staff were observed throughout the inspection.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 August 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 20 February 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/02/2023	Full	Good
27/07/2021	Full	Good
05/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
02/04/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Most children make good progress from their starting points. This is achieved by the delivery of consistent care to the children from a resolute, nurturing and experienced staff team.

Children benefit from the close attention that they receive from the staff. This supports the children's positive well-being. Staff ensure that the children attend all their routine health appointments and receive relevant guidance and advice on matters that will improve their health.

The children's progress includes increased education attendance, improved health outcomes, increased self-esteem and gaining independent living skills.

The staff prioritise the children's needs and focus on building strong connections with them. The staff know the children very well. This enables them to provide the required care and meet the individual and diverse needs of the children.

The staff recognise the importance and value of good and trusting relationships. This allows the children to accept the guidance and support from staff. One child said, 'The staff are great here.'

Children are valued and know that their views matter. The home has an embedded ethos, where children are respected. Children know that the staff have their best interests at heart. This helps the children to be more self-assured.

All children have a school placement or an alternative education provision. Staff help the children to try and understand the importance of learning. College placements have been secured for the start of the new academic year. Where there is a barrier to learning, the staff work tirelessly to support the children to engage.

A therapeutic social worker works together with the staff to look at ways that will best support the children's emotional and mental health needs. This, along with the staff's use and development of the PACE model of care (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy), helps most children to become more settled. Children become more able to better regulate their emotions as a result of this support.

Children have daily discussions, regular key-work and skills sessions and regular meetings. They make suggestions and give their views and opinions about matters that affect their daily lives. Children have access to an advocate. Children who speak English as an additional language have access to a telephone interpretation service and helpful apps to aid communication. This ensures that the children's views are heard by professionals and others.

Children are supported well to learn a range of life skills, including cooking, budgeting their finances and learning about paying utility bills. This helps to prepare children for moving on to semi-independent accommodation and adult life.

Children benefit from living in a house that is well decorated and furnished. It is clean and tidy and has homely touches, including cushions, ornaments, pictures and colour-coordinated furnishings, curtains and decoration. This helps to make this house a home.

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

Children become increasingly safe as the staff fully implement all safeguarding procedures and measures to keep the children safe.

Staff know the children extremely well. They have a clear understanding of the care children require and their identified and potential risks and vulnerabilities. Detailed records are kept that specify the actions that the staff must take to reduce any identified risks and vulnerabilities for the children. The staff implement the strategies identified. This assists in keeping the children safer.

When there are serious safety concerns, the manager and staff promptly engage with all of the relevant professionals. This ensures that a multi-agency approach is taken to safeguard the child. Children take part in key-work sessions so that they can keep themselves safe. For example, they learn about the risks associated with gangs, going missing from the home and antisocial behaviour.

The manager takes immediate and effective action when any allegations are made. He follows the procedures and protocols and quickly informs the local authority designated officer and the child's placing social workers. This ensures that all allegations are fully investigated and that children are safeguarded.

Missing-from-home incidents have increased for one child. Staff work tirelessly to find children when they go missing from home, and they seek support from the police, in line with their protocols. When children return, they are welcomed home and supported with care. Staff carry out direct work with the children to identify the triggers and influencing factors for such occurrences. This assists the children to better understand the dangers of not returning home. This action supports the children to become progressively safer.

Children benefit from clear and consistent boundaries and rules. Their achievements are celebrated. Children respond well to the frequent praise and the regular acknowledgement of their positive behaviour. There is an established ethos where children are rewarded for their positive achievements. Consequences for negative behaviour are rarely used. The constant and positive care that the children receive helps them to feel safer and more secure. However, consequences are not always recorded fully or in a timely way. The duration of the incident when a low-level physical intervention technique was used has not been accurately recorded. The

impact of this for children is low. Nevertheless, it falls short of meeting the expectations of the regulations.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is highly committed, and his aspirations are child focused. This approach disseminates to the whole staff team. This is reflected in feedback received from professionals and agencies, who say that the manager and staff prioritise children's needs.

The manager has effective monitoring systems in place to ensure that the children consistently receive good-quality care. Staff receive regular supervision sessions that have a strong focus on children's care and staff's development and well-being. This has enabled the staff to deliver consistently good-quality care to the children.

The manager is ambitious for the children. He advocates strongly on their behalf. Through his involvement in strategy discussions, looked after reviews, daily communications with the staff and managing safeguarding incidents, the children receive the right level of care and support at the right times.

Staff retention is excellent. New members of staff experience a thorough, well-coordinated induction. This includes an extensive period of shadowing more-experienced staff before they become part of the shift team. This approach provides new members of staff with positive role models and opportunities to build those ever-important relationships with the children. In turn, this helps to maintain the consistency of care that the children require so that they can continue to thrive.

There is compelling evidence that the staff encourage and ensure that the children participate in day-to-day decisions about their lives. This also includes the changes to the home environment. This demonstrates that the voice of the child is heard and acted on.

Children's case records are purposeful and reflect the work that is carried out with the children. key-work and skills sessions with the children support the vehicle for change.

Relationships with other professionals are excellent as the manager ensures that there is a genuine team-around-the-child approach.

There is a dedicated pursuit of continuous professional development for the staff. This is achieved through regular guest speakers at staff meetings, podcasts, and mandatory and more-specialist training online or face to face. However, there is a missed opportunity to showcase all this training and staff development as this is not all recorded on the staff training matrix.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that records are kept in the home to demonstrate that regulations 35 to 39 are maintained. All children's case records (regulation 36) must be kept up to date and stored securely while they remain in the home. In particular, full and accurate details should be recorded for consequences, physical interventions and staff training. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 62, paragraph 14.3)

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: SC033657

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Leeds City Council

Registered provider address: Civic Hall, Calverley Street, Leeds LS1 1UR

Responsible individual: Benjamin Finley

Registered manager: Andrew Magner

Inspector

Debbie Foster, Social Care Inspector

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