

SC033657

Registered provider: Leeds City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a local authority.

It provides care for up to five children who may experience social and emotional difficulties. The home uses a therapeutic model of care to support children.

At the time of the inspection, four children were living in the home.

The manager is suitably experienced and registered with Ofsted in November 2018.

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 September 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	outstanding
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 23 August 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/08/2023	Full	Good
20/02/2023	Full	Good
27/07/2021	Full	Good
05/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

All four children were spoken with during this inspection. The children say that they are happy living in this home. Laughing and joking can be heard around the home, and the atmosphere is warm and friendly. The children have been helped to build trusting relationships with the staff. This is because the staff are open, honest and transparent with the children and clear consistent boundaries are in place.

The aim of this home is to prepare older children for the changes that come with adulthood. The staff work closely with the children to develop their independence skills, including practical tasks such as shopping, cooking, cleaning, using public transport and self-care skills. This support ensures that the children are better equipped for the next stage in their lives. However, there is still some development needed in terms of ensuring that all children, who are getting ready to leave the home, access education or training.

The staff provide support to help the children tackle feelings of loneliness and isolation. They actively encourage and support the children to build and maintain positive relationships with their families and friends. Family and friends visit this home and spend quality time with the children. The staff understand the importance of increasing the children's positive support networks as they prepare to move on.

The children are supported to engage in meaningful conversations. Sensitive subjects are discussed in a respectful and understanding way. Staff ensure that the children understand what acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is, while also recognising that there are reasons behind children's actions. The staff encourage the children by focusing on the positives and helping them feel understood.

Professionals speak positively about the care provided to the children and feel that the children are helped to make progress. One professional said, 'I am very happy with the care afforded to my child. The positive differences now are like night and day.' A second professional said, '[Name of child] presents as much happier and chatty. [Name of child] has grown in confidence.'

While there is a focus on promoting independence, including encouraging the children to clean their own bedrooms, the external windows in the children's rooms are not clean. There is an unrealistic expectation from the staff that this is the children's responsibility. This does not reinforce to children the importance of maintaining a clean and pleasant environment.

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

Consistent care and the development of positive relationships between the staff and the children have led to a reduction in incidents. Staff effectively use their relationship-building skills to support and guide the children. This results in a more stable and safer environment for the children to live in.

Staff support the children in making safe and informed choices. Staff have discussions with children to explore important topics such as safe sex, consent, healthy relationships and weapons awareness work. The children are engaging with external services, which is helping to support a reduction in substance abuse and criminal behaviours.

Risk assessments are regularly updated to reflect identified risks. Safety plans are in place to address these risks. The staff follow these plans and act swiftly to ensure that the children are kept as safe as possible. The staff use a restorative approach, helping them to work through their actions, learn from the experience and understand how to make safer choices.

Staff receive training on the whistle-blowing policy and how to escalate concerns. However, not all staff are aware of the procedures. It is important that all staff are aware of this policy as it provides a further layer of protection for the children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager demonstrates an exceptional enthusiasm for driving positive change in this home. He has significantly contributed to improvements in the quality of care for the children. In particular, the implementation of a trauma-informed model of care. This commitment to positive development is reflected in the overall atmosphere in the home and enhances the experiences for the children living here.

Staff feel valued and empowered to contribute to the home's positive culture. They are extremely positive about the manager. The manager consistently motivates the staff through clear communication and through leading by example. This results in high staff morale and improved quality of care for children.

The manager is innovative and creative when seeking to ensure the highest quality of care for the children. He is proactively working with care leavers who have lived at the home to gain valuable insights into their experiences, seeking children's views on what improvements can be made. The manager is engaging directly with the Care Leavers Council to speak to care-experienced people who have experience of the care system. He ensures that their feedback is integrated into the decision-making process. This has led to meaningful change. For example, improvements can be seen in the language used when the staff write in the children's daily logs.

Team meetings and the access to therapeutic support are a significant strength in this home. Staff highly value these opportunities. The manager plays an important role by sharing knowledge, resources and best practice. He ensures that the staff are equipped to meet the needs of the children. These meetings are inclusive, and the children are welcome to join. This further strengthens the relationships between the staff and the children.

There is strong multi-agency working in this home. This is testament to the manager's leadership and collaborative approach. Professionals speak extremely positively about the manager and his ability to build effective partnerships. This ensures that the children

receive coordinated support from different services, leading to better outcomes for their care. One social worker said, 'He makes change happen.'

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. In particular, the registered person should ensure that all external windows are cleaned without delay. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9).
- The registered person should ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate a child is in any way at risk of harm. In particular, the registered person should ensure that staff have knowledge of the whistle-blowing policy. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.12).

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: Merrion House, Merrion Centre, Leeds LS2 8LX

Responsible individual: Benjamin Finley

Registered manager: Andrew Magner

Inspector

Jo Birtwhistle, Social Care Inspector

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