

SC034746

Registered provider: Kingston upon Hull City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and run by a local authority. It provides care for up to four children who plan to live in a medium- to long-term residential setting.

The manager registered in September 2019.

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 August 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: 27 April 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: A compliance notice was issued under Regulation 12 following the last full inspection in April 2021. A monitoring visit conducted on site on 9 June 2021 found that the home had made the required improvements.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/04/2021	Full	Inadequate
04/06/2019	Full	Good
21/02/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
14/05/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Staff work hard to establish good relationships with children. Staff also build strong links with children's families to promote consistency in the guidance children receive. Children are supported to have safe planned visits to people who are important to them, and staff work relentlessly to enable those appropriate family relationships to thrive. This helps children to develop their sense of identity and increases the likelihood that they can return to live safely with family. This is a strength of the home.

The experience children have of education is variable and attendance is low. Staff understand the barriers to children's learning and listen to the views of the children about what would help them to overcome these. Staff work with other professionals in identifying the most appropriate provision and timetabling for children, and then help by transporting children to and from school.

In the absence of children attending formal education there are too few opportunities for informal learning. Visits to tourist attractions and other activities offer new experiences but these do not fill the gap created by not regularly engaging in formal education effectively. This is likely to disadvantage children in the longer term.

Children are given the opportunity to meet with specialists if they have specific needs or vulnerabilities. This promotes children's well-being and can help to improve their emotional health. Even though help is offered, it is not always accepted by the children. On those occasions, staff take advice from a psychologist on how to support children most effectively. This helps to prevent children become increasingly unsafe when they become distressed.

When other professionals express reservations about new children moving into the home, these are not always given sufficient weight. This has contributed to children living together who influence each other negatively, who go missing together or who encourage each other to behave violently. This has led to police involvement and arrests.

Staff have made concerted efforts to support the children in the face of some challenging incidents and have taken effective action to manage the children's relationships. Staff also recognise the benefits of structured activity as a way of minimising risk and influencing children's behaviour. As a result, children can follow their interests, and staff provide children with lots of support to go to places and to do things which are enjoyable and purposeful. This also helps children to develop confidence and a sense of belonging in the community.

The physical condition of the home is good in some areas but in others the building looks tired and institutional. In reviewing the health and safety documentation there were several shortfalls in terms of monitoring and maintaining the premises. These shortfalls also extend to fire safety, where some equipment has not been checked regularly to make sure it is working properly, and some tests and servicing have not been completed. This does not give reassurance that the home is free from hazards, nor does it evidence to the children that they are worthy of investment.

Over recent weeks, three of the children have moved out. This has happened in a planned way after seeking their views and opinions and was done at their pace. The work completed by staff to help children develop skills for independent living is good. The support offered to one young person to prepare them to leave the home is notable as being of a very high standard.

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

Risk assessments and behaviour management plans are of a good standard. They include clear strategies and actions for staff to follow. Staff are familiar with these plans and follow them. They also review them as children's circumstances and behaviours change. This results in children receiving care which is consistent and helps to promote their safety.

Staff make efforts to find out where children are and that they are safe when they are away from the home. There are occasions when children visit their family and friends who are assessed by social workers as being unsafe. On these occasions, staff respond quickly to return the children back to the home. Sometimes when children are with their peers, they try to avoid staff finding them. If staff think that this puts the children at risk, they will repeatedly search for them to try to locate them. This promotes the children's welfare.

There have been occasions when staff have been worried that children may be at risk of exploitation. On these occasions, staff escalate concerns to the police and safeguarding specialists so that these risks can be managed better. Staff are effective in monitoring and reducing online risks through using safety apps on children's phones and encouraging children to share the content of their phones. Children are safer as a result.

There is a shortfall in the management oversight of episodes of children going missing from the home, which has contributed to some return home interviews not being offered or completed. This is a missed opportunity to understand better the reasons for children going missing and therefore reduce the risk of repetition. In all other aspects relating to children going missing from the home, their plans are followed, and staff work cohesively to bring children home quickly and safely.

The children's medication records do not provide an overview of all the medication children have taken on any one day. This lack of clarity over the extent of

medication which has been administered leaves the potential for children to take too much medication. There have not been any incidents arising from this, but the current records of administration do not promote safe use of medication.

Staff take children to visit the local fire station to help them understand the risks of fire-setting and arson. This helps to increase the children's understanding of fire safety, reduce risks and promote positive attitudes towards the emergency services. Staff complete focused sessions with children about specific topics such as drug misuse, criminal behaviour and relationships. Some of these sessions are planned with the help of a psychologist to make sure they will be helpful to the children. Staff also prepare children for these difficult conversations so that they are emotionally ready to talk about these sensitive subjects. This helps children to understand risks.

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

Staff speak positively about the support they receive from leaders and managers. The quality of record-keeping has improved since the last inspection, and management oversight is evident on documentation. However, not all the spreadsheets used by managers to track that aspects of care have been delivered by others are accurately maintained. Therefore, these do not consistently support effective monitoring of the quality of care and have led to the manager missing opportunities to challenge practice or escalate concerns.

Some of the staff's responsibilities linked to monitoring and auditing the physical conditions of the home have not been fulfilled. This means that repairs have not always been carried out in a timely way. Staff supervision records written by the senior care officers are not always clear and do not identify or track actions that staff need to complete. The manager's checks to make sure delegated responsibilities are being undertaken reliably and to a good standard fall short.

Staff training records show that the staff are up to date and receive good training. The staff are enthusiastic about some of the recent training opportunities and the relevance of these in helping children to understand potential risks. The manager has also arranged extra training in exploitation and modern slavery so that staff have the most up-to-date knowledge. This promotes staff's ability to identify risks as soon as they emerge.

Managers have a strong vision for providing nurturing care and promoting restorative practice. Staff understand and embrace this. Managers and staff are currently preparing to relocate to new premises in the coming weeks and this has created an air of optimism and excitement for both children and staff. Managers and staff express the view that a newly built home will reflect the nurturing culture advocated by the manager and will assist children in understanding how much they are valued.

Leaders and managers have positive relationships with other professionals and share appropriate information regularly. When the practice of other professionals falls short, the manager will sometimes challenge. As a result, there is better joint working with the police when children go missing from the home, and there are greater options offered to children around education. This promotes the safety and well-being of children.

The manager has led staff to do some particularly effective work. This is in respect of ensuring children's views are heard when trying to identify the right school, promoting family relationships, and supporting children to move out either into independent accommodation or back to family. This has improved the experiences of children.

Three requirements and a recommendation made at the last inspection have also been met. A compliance notice made at the last inspection was already met at an earlier visit.

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, the 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— promote opportunities for each child to learn informally. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(v)) This refers to providing children with an alternative structure and activities during the days when they refuse education, which provides opportunities to learn.	30 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 designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(d)) This refers to ensuring that health and safety checks are conducted and recorded in line with the home's policy (building repairs, emergency lighting, fire alarm, fire equipment and gas installation).	30 September 2021
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	30 September 2021

promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) This refers to ensuring that monitoring systems are fit for purpose and that no aspects of care are omitted or overlooked during audits and monitoring exercises, including those delegated to others.	
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children’s home. In particular the registered person must ensure that— a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(c)) This refers to the provision of medication registration records (MAR sheets) for each child for all medications, be they prescribed or over the counter.	30 September 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the local authority meets their obligation when a child returns from being missing from care. When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. The registered person should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child’s assessed needs as recorded in the child’s relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

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: SC034746

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Kingston upon Hull City Council

Registered provider address: The Guildhall, Alfred Gelder Street, Hull HU1 2AA

Responsible individual: Michele Colthup

Registered manager: Tracey Carter

Inspector

Rachel Ruth, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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