

SC035154

Registered provider: Calderdale Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a local authority. It offers care for up to five children who may experience emotional and social difficulties. At the time of the inspection, two children lived in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in February 2024. She is currently studying for the required qualification and has the skills to manage a children's home.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 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	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 26 September 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/09/2023	Full	Good
26/09/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
05/07/2022	Full	Inadequate
13/01/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive good-quality personalised care. The home is well presented, and children's choice of decor is introduced as soon as they move in. This helps children to feel a sense of ownership and belonging.

Staff and managers know the children well and express positive feelings for them. Children make progress in various ways, even when there are unforeseen crises in their lives. Some children have faced challenges, and staff have shown resilience in caring for them consistently through these times.

Social workers say that staff build positive relationships with the children. Staff and managers understand the trauma that children have experienced and demonstrate empathy. One social worker said, 'The staff helped [name of child] understand that he can really trust adults.' This helps children to build other important relationships.

Key-work discussions and journey work sessions are an area of strength of staff practice. Staff use their expertise to positively engage children and influence their choices without overpowering them. The records of these discussions capture the children's learning and experiences, and their thoughts and feelings are clearly shown.

When children near adulthood, staff support them to gain the skills needed to live independently. This is done gradually at the child's pace, helping the child to develop a sense of self-belief. When young people leave the home and move into their own accommodation, the staff maintain their relationship, as any family would. This provides consistency and continuity for the young people.

When children move into the home, this is well planned with opportunities for visits and time to meet the staff and children. The staff are prepared as they learn about the children, their needs and vulnerabilities from the outset. If children's needs become complex and cannot be met by the staff, then decisions to move children are taken in the child's best interests. Children's moves out from this home are carefully managed, even when this needs to be progressed urgently due to escalating risk. Careful and considered planning helps to minimise children's potential sense of rejection.

Staff respond to children's changing needs. Managers and carers work with education, health and social care specialists to provide the right help and support for children. This promotes improvement in children's school attendance, their emotional and mental well-being and behaviours.

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

Some staff feel unable to follow the guidance detailed in plans to manage children's behaviours. This results in staff repeatedly calling for police assistance and children being criminalised. Staff use physical intervention techniques to hold children to keep them or others safe. However, the children are not always provided with the best opportunity to talk about their experiences of being held. This is a missed opportunity to learn from these incidents.

Children frequently go missing from home. When children are missing, the staff work with the police to try and return the child quickly and safely. When children have returned home, they are not always visited by an independent person to try and help understand the reason why they were missing. When children are visited by the independent person, the content of the information is not routinely shared with the manager in a timely fashion. This again is a missed opportunity to understand the risks for children and learn and prevent further incidents.

During their time in the home, some children become increasingly unsafe due to external influences and community risks. Managers and staff try to meet these changing needs, but as the risks change, it is clear some children need to move elsewhere.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Managers show strong leadership. The registered manager and the deputy manager work effectively as a partnership. They are tenacious, and through their actions they demonstrate that they are seeking the best for children. Children's plans are regularly updated to help staff to deliver consistent care practices. When staff do not follow the children's plans, these shortfalls are addressed by the managers.

The model of care outlined in the home's statement of purpose is fully embraced by the managers. The managers model good practice for staff. Previous requirements and recommendations raised at the last inspection have been met.

Staff receive regular reflective supervision, and this is supplemented by detailed emails and regular team meetings to guide staff. Staff are provided with mandatory training, and additional bespoke training is quickly identified in response to children's specific needs. This helps to promote a consistent approach with the children.

The manager has difficulty gathering feedback from some professionals, staff and the children's families. The regulator's annual survey also yielded no returns, and there is a lack of clarity as to whether this was distributed by the manager. This is an area for improvement so that the views and feedback from others can be understood, considered and implemented by the manager.

Leaders and managers are held in very high regard by other professionals. The effectiveness of their communication and advocacy for children is repeatedly highlighted by members of the wider team who support the children. Children are also supported to develop relationships with an independent advocate, and this helps them to have a say in the care that they receive.

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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(xi)) The registered person should ensure that staff do not involve police in behaviour management unless the threshold for doing so is met.	27 October 2024
The registered person must ensure that— within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(c))	27 October 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children and others are consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, including via the regulator's annual survey, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care

provided. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)

- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from home, the responsible local authority provides 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 9.3)

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: SC035154

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Calderdale Council

Registered provider address: Princess Buildings, Princess Street, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX1 1TS

Responsible individual: Guy Greenwood

Registered manager: Heather Daibell

Inspector

Rachel Ruth, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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