

SC035154

Registered provider: Calderdale Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a local authority and provides care for up to five children.

Three children currently live in the home.

The manager is not yet registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 September 2023

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 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/09/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
05/07/2022	Full	Inadequate
13/01/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
03/08/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff know the children well and have regular focused conversations to gather the children's views and wishes. These views then influence the way they are looked after. The care provided is individualised. This is seen in the children's bedrooms, which reflect their own tastes and preferences.

Communal areas in the home are repurposed in line with children's changing interests. For example, a quiet second lounge is being altered to provide a gaming and cinema room. This encourages children to spend time together and enjoy joint activities.

Professionals hold the team in high regard. They say that effective communication is a strength of the staff. Children also speak positively about how they feel about the home. One child described the staff as 'nice, caring people' and said, '[Name of home] is a good place to live.'

Children have a variety of new experiences. They have days out with staff and are encouraged to choose hobbies such as going to the gym, skate park, or playing football. This also helps children to make friendships outside the home.

Children are helped to make decisions about their future education and careers. They are given good support to achieve their goals in this regard. This validates children's choices and promotes their life chances.

Children make good progress in most areas of their life. Staff support children to overcome any barriers, for example with education attendance, family relationships or general well-being. However, there have been long delays in children receiving psychological assessments. These delays have been challenged but with little effect. This means that children have still not been assessed and related support is therefore not yet in place.

Some staff do not have a good understanding about all areas of children's progress. For example, they cannot say with any confidence what level children are achieving at in school. This hampers staff's ability to provide support with learning which is in line with children's ability.

Children do not always have a well-managed transition out of the home, which impacts negatively on staff and children. However, matching of children is now more effective than previously, which helps to ensure that children settle and do not then leave the home in an unplanned way.

Children are supported to build and maintain important relationships with their wider network. The children have strong views about time spent with family, which are understood by staff. However, the children are not always provided with

representation by an advocate. This misses opportunities to make their voice even more prominent in care planning.

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

Staff can describe each child's risks and vulnerabilities. The staff follow detailed plans to minimise and mitigate risks. However, there are some shortfalls in the safeguarding practice.

The home has had an increased number of allegations to investigate since the last inspection. On at least one occasion, an allegation was made and not notified to the local authority designated officer in a timely manner and until prompted. This does not align with the provider's policies.

Children have specific vulnerabilities but not all staff undertake additional training in these areas. This fails to provide them with further informed insight into children's behaviours. When children display concerning behaviour, specialist help is not always provided to the children. Behaviours therefore go unchanged and continue to be exhibited. This misses an opportunity to help children make progress.

The plans and assessment records for the children are detailed, regularly reviewed and show management oversight. However, sometimes, they are confusing for the reader and open to interpretation, or they do not reflect the most up-to-date position. The narrative of risk assessments does not always align with ratings. This does not support staff in their work to have a quick way to understand levels of risk.

Medication is stored and administered in line with the provider's policy. However, when medication is misplaced, there is insufficient rigour in investigating and recording the error. This does not provide reassurance that there is an overall thorough approach to managing medication safely.

The regulator is informed about significant events as required. However, the content of at least one notification was not fully reflective of the events. This reduces the regulator's ability to have oversight of such safeguarding issues and check that the staff's response is appropriate.

When children are reported as missing, staff know what to do and act appropriately. Recruitment checks are properly carried out, which provides reassurance about those adults being safe to work with children.

Relationships between the children are now much improved with the current group, and incidents between them are rare and do not form into negative patterns of interaction.

Children are only held for their own safety or that of others. There has been a reduction in the number of occasions on which children are held. Staff are suitably

trained, and incidents have management oversight to ensure that they are proportionate.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager and her deputy are both relatively newly appointed. Despite the brevity of time in post, they have made a strong start at embedding their own positive culture in the home. Staff say they feel that the team is resilient and supportive of the new management team. The changes made support the longer-term aim of providing a nurturing and settled environment for the children.

The manager has shared her vision for the home, which is child-focused and aspirational. Systems have been introduced to improve tracking and monitoring, and there are plans to further develop these. Existing systems have revealed a reduction in significant events, missing-from-care incidents and use of restraint. The manager says that she is committed to reducing these even further.

Supervision sessions and team meetings are productive, and staff say they find them helpful in promoting team cohesion and consistency. The manager has a clear understanding of the progress children make. She has a plan to record this differently to make outcomes easier to track. This has started but is not yet fully implemented or embedded.

The 'journey folders' record many aspects of the children's lives and are a strength of the home. They are set out in a child-friendly way and are helpful documents for the children to look at now and in the future.

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses. They have met the requirement raised at the last inspection.

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 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 staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)) This relates to ensuring that: risk ratings align with known information about a child and that written records are a current and accurate summary; where harmful behaviours are exhibited, an appropriate intervention is identified and provided to reduce behaviours; allegations are investigated in line with the home's allegations policy; staff receive	19 November 2023

training in how to manage ligature incidents and sexually harmful behaviours.	
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23 (1)) This relates to investigating and recording any medication errors to conclusion.	19 November 2023
A notification made under this regulation— must include details of— the matter; the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter; must be made or confirmed in writing. (Regulation 40 (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b)) This relates to ensuring that notifications include details of all aspects of an event, particularly those which are most serious.	19 November 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff regularly remind children of their right to access an independent advocate, concerning any matter relevant to the child's status as looked after. Independent advocates can support both the child and the home to seek redress of issues which affect them, such as lack of contact with their social worker, contact with family and leaving care grants, in addition to issues about their care in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.17)
- The registered person should ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to understand each child's education and training targets and their next steps for learning. If a child's progress is not in line with their agreed targets or next steps, staff should seek expert advice from education professionals, such as the headteacher of the virtual school, special educational needs coordinator, learning mentor or teacher. Staff must challenge the child's education or training provider if the child does not receive sufficient support to progress as outlined in their relevant plans. Staff should act as effective advocates for or on behalf of a child

who may be experiencing difficulties with education or training matters, including, but not limited to, attainment, admissions, attendance or behaviour, as a good parent would do. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', pages 27 and 28, paragraph 5.11 to 5.12)

- The registered person should ensure that when a child needs additional health or well-being support, staff work with the child's placing authority to enable proper and immediate access to any specialist medical, psychological or psychiatric support required, and challenge them through regulation 5 (engaging with the wider system) to ensure that children's needs are met, if this does not happen. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.10)
- The registered person should note that as well as longer-term support for children to move on from the home effectively (regulation 6(2)(b)(vi)), each child leaving the home is supported in the period immediately before their departure. The registered person should work with the placing authority to ensure that each child's transition is planned and help each child to prepare for leaving both practically and emotionally. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 57, paragraph 11.9)

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: Post vacant

Inspector

Rachel Ruth, Social Care Inspector

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