

SC035339

Registered provider: Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a local authority. It provides care for up to four children who may have social or emotional difficulties. At the time of this inspection, four children were living at the home.

The manager has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 17 February 2025

Date of last inspection: 21 May 2024

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

Since the last full inspection, four children have moved out of the home. Three of these moves have been part of the children's plans. However, one child moved due to the staff not being able to meet their needs. The manager has reflected well on this and lessons have been learned that will reduce the risk of children needing to move in the future.

None of the four children that live at the home attend education provision consistently. While the manager supports children with their individual barriers to attendance and has arranged for a tutor to attend the home weekly, the children are not receiving an appropriate level of education.

Since the last inspection, children's views, wishes and feelings are considered more and they are consulted with on their care regularly. At the time of the visit, all children were going on a two-night trip to London, which they had all been looking forward to.

The home is large but homely. There are plenty of games, books and technology for the children to choose from. The rooms are nicely furnished and have photos of the children on the walls. However, all children's bedrooms were untidy and required attention.

Although there are still staff vacancies, these are now managed better and include the use of consistent agency staff, who now receive supervision sessions. As a result, children are supported by familiar staff they can build relationships with. Additionally, there are now appropriate staffing levels in place.

Allegations and complaints made by children are appropriately investigated and shared with the relevant professionals. This ensures that children feel listened to and that their worries are taken seriously.

Staff now understand children's risks and act appropriately. For example, when children leave the home and do not return on time, the staff actively search for and work with others to bring children home safely. The staff are now guided by robust plans that are regularly reviewed.

There has been a reduction in incidents of children being anxious or distressed since the last inspection. However, when there has been the use of restraint or restrictive practice, this has not always been recorded in line with legislation. This makes it difficult to assess whether the measure was necessary and proportionate.

There is now a manager in post who has submitted their application to register with Ofsted. As a result, management oversight of children's records, including significant incidents and staff recruitment, has improved.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/05/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/05/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
28/06/2022	Full	Good
07/01/2020	Full	Inadequate

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— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible; and help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(viii)(x))	4 April 2025
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration;	4 April 2025

details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;

the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;

the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and

a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;

within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—

has spoken to the user about the measure; and

has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and

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)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that children's bedrooms are kept clean and tidy. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.20)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC035339

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council

Registered provider address: Oldham Council, Civic Centre, Oldham OL1 1UT

Responsible individual: Nicholas Whitbread

Registered manager: Post Vacant

Inspector

Kerri Lynch, Social Care Inspector

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