

# SC035954

Registered provider: Metropolitan Borough of Wirral

Full 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 and provides short breaks for up to six children who may have physical disabilities and/or complex learning disabilities. In addition, the home provides care on a permanent basis for up to six children.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2022.

### Inspection dates: 18 and 19 June 2024

|                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>good</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                                             |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | good |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|

|                                           |      |
|-------------------------------------------|------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | good |
|-------------------------------------------|------|

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 13 February 2024

**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            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 13/02/2024      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 23/08/2022      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 30/03/2022      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness          |
| 12/10/2021      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

At the time of the inspection, nine children were present in the home. Six children live in the residential area of the home, and children also access the service through a series of short breaks or extended stays.

Staff and children were observed to have warm and sensitive relationships. Staff are skilled in guiding and reassuring children. This helps children to feel cared for and understood. Staff understand that children need to be nurtured to feel happy and safe. This nurturing care helps children to flourish.

Children have positive experiences in the home. They participate in a range of enjoyable activities, such as having days out at the local sea life centre, going on trips to the cinema, shopping and going to parks. Recently, one child has enjoyed a birthday party with his friends who live in the home. The manager has recently reintroduced the use of memory books. This helps to provide children with good memories of their time spent in the home.

The home is presented to a good standard. Since the last inspection, improvements have been made and the communal areas are much brighter. Children's bedrooms are well presented. The sensory rooms are key locked. The manager took immediate action to address this during the inspection.

Children's plans are child friendly and capture all important and relevant information. Additionally, achievements and rewards in the home are celebrated. Children are making progress with their independence and social skills. For example, one child is now using the toilet independently, and another child can now wash and dress himself.

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

Safeguarding practice is effective, and the use of one-to-one staff support significantly minimises the risk of harm. Staff receive safeguarding training that is specific to children's disabilities. Additionally, staff have a clear understanding of children's needs, vulnerabilities and the potential risks they may be exposed to. Staff understand how to report and respond to any safeguarding concerns. However, not all staff fully understand the role of the local authority designated officer. A recommendation has been made to address this.

Medication storage systems are safe. However, some children require medication to be given with food to hide it. In such cases, parents provide written consent to the covert administration of the medication by staff. Occasionally, this requires staff to crush the medication. However, Leaders and managers have not sourced information from a medical practitioner about the potential consequences of crushing some forms of medication.

There are appropriate staffing ratios to support children's complex needs. Since the last inspection, there have been no incidents of children going missing. Staff know what action to take should this occur.

Physical intervention techniques are used as a last resort. Since the last inspection, the recording of incidents and debriefs has improved. Creative ways, such as the use of smiley faces and observations, have been implemented to enable children take part in a debrief following a restraint. This ensures that children are helped to express their emotions.

Leaders and managers respond effectively when children make allegations. They ensure that actions are taken to protect the child in line with the home's policies and procedures. The management team has worked to improve recording systems and follow up actions to ensure that they are recorded clearly.

Staff are suitably trained in fire awareness, and children regularly take part in fire drills. These drills are tailored for each child. However, the registered person should ensure that all children have a personal emergency evacuation plan that provides staff with details of the support they require in the event of a fire.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The manager is experienced and suitably qualified. She is supported well by the responsible individual and two deputies. They are child focused and knowledgeable about the children's complex needs. Managers advocate well for the children and work effectively with professionals raising concerns through multi-agency meetings. This improves the quality of care that children receive.

Staff keep detailed individual plans for the children. Despite regular reviews and updates, some information remains confusing because historical details are kept alongside current updates. However, the staff team is fully aware of all the children's needs and actively works to support them in line with the routines agreed on in the plans. Managers understand shortfalls in record-keeping and work to remove out-of-date information to improve the quality of plans.

The home is well organised, and staff say they can see a much wider management presence in the home. Staff say that the manager is approachable and that the management team is supportive.

Due to some staff vacancies and sickness, the manager has needed to use agency staff. However, the manager ensures that these are a consistent core group of staff who are required to read the children's plans before starting their shift.

The manager has carried out a review of the home and developed a monitoring tool. The manager has also made good use of external monitoring systems to improve the recording systems and actions to follow.

Staff are provided with a range of training that is specific and relevant to the children's needs. This ensures that staff have the skills and knowledge to support children effectively.

Leaders have redesigned the format for supervision. As a result, supervision records hold more detail. The records include a reflective discussion between managers and staff about the children in their care and the quality of practice in the home. Staff say that team meetings are a good source of information-sharing. However, team meetings are not taking place regularly. A recommendation has been made to address this.

Feedback from parents and professionals is positive. They say that children are settled and well cared for. One professional said, 'A strength of the service is the long-standing staff, and this means that they know the children well.'

The manager has met all the previous requirements and recommendations that were 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      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <p>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home.</p> <p>In particular the registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(c))</p> <p>In particular, the manager must ensure that medical advice is sought to understand any potential consequences of crushing medication.</p>                                                                                                         | 2 August 2024 |
| <p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which—</p> <p>include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child;</p> <p>are kept up to date; and</p> <p>are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring that children's records contain accurate information. Furthermore, if there is 'when required' protocol in place for the use of medication, information must be reflected in any incidents in line with the organisation's own procedures.</p> | 2 August 2024 |

### Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all staff are aware of the role of the local authority designated officer in line with their policy on protecting children from abuse and neglect. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.19)

- The registered person should ensure that good employment practice is maintained. This means that team meetings should take place regularly to share information effectively. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

## **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:** SC035954

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider address:** Metropolitan Borough of Wirral, Education Department, Hamilton Building, Conway Street, Birkenhead, Merseyside CH41 4FD

**Responsible individual:** Debra Kewley

**Registered manager:** Susan Hughes

## Inspectors

Judith Birchall, Social Care Inspector  
Jennifer Quest, Social Care Inspector



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