

SC035954

Registered provider: Metropolitan Borough of Wirral

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This service provides short-term breaks for up to six children. The provider states in their statement of purpose that they provide care for children who may have physical disabilities and/or complex learning disabilities. In addition, the home also provides accommodation on a permanent basis for up to three children. The local authority owns and manages this home.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since October 2022.

Inspection date: 28 March 2023

Date of last inspection: 23 August 2022

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At these inspections, the inspectors evaluated:

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

Inspectors have 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

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The care of children

There is effective matching and planning in place when children move in and out of the home. Managers and staff ensure that there are regular tea visits in place prior to children moving in or accessing their short break. When children move on from the home, this is celebrated by parties and gifts for the children to recognise their time spent in the home.

At the last inspection, inspectors identified a lack of up-to-date education, health and care plans on file for children. The manager was taking action to address this with the local authority. However, some children still do not have an up-to-date plan. As a result, staff do not have all the accurate information about the children's needs.

The home has recently undergone some redecoration in the lounge area. This gives the home a bright and welcoming feel. There are still some areas of the home where work is yet to be completed. The manager has a schedule of work in place for this. Additionally, the staff have worked with an outside company to source specialist padding for some of the beds. As a result, this helps children to sleep safely and comfortably.

Children's views of the home are understood, and the management team has introduced new feedback forms in various communication formats. This means that children can share their views with staff regularly.

The safety of children

Risks are understood by staff, who know the children well. Since the last inspection, the manager has improved these documents. Staff understand what action they must take when a child protection concern arises. However, there is further work to be done around clearer identification of risks, and the manager must ensure that these are individualised to each child. This is a repeat requirement and has been restated.

Staff use a range of de-escalation techniques to help children when they are upset or distressed. There are individualised behaviour support plans in place. Consequently, the use of restraint is very minimal.

The manager has ensured that improvements have been made in obtaining all the correct information for staff prior to them starting in the home. However, inspectors found that not all staff have references on file in line with safer recruitment guidelines. A recommendation has been made to address this.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

There is an experienced and suitably qualified manager in the home. Since the last inspection, she has registered with Ofsted.

The staff spoke about the positive changes that the new manager has started to implement in the home. Staff say that they work well together, and the manager is flexible and provides guidance.

The manager has made some changes to incident records, and the quality in the recording of these records has improved. However, more work is required around her oversight of these documents, including risk management plans. Furthermore, the manager must ensure that all staff complete restraint training. This is repeat requirement and has been restated.

The manager is making good use of external and internal monitoring. She has recently used recommendations made from her monthly independent visits to enhance children's feedback forms, and improvements have been made to ensure that there is regular in-house auditing on children's case files and medication.

Feedback from professionals is positive. One professional said, 'They always put children first.' This is a strength of the home. Furthermore, they said that staff work collaboratively with families and professionals, and there is good communication.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/08/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
30/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
12/10/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
08/01/2020	Full	Outstanding

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, 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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (c)) This specifically relates to obtaining all up-to-date education, health and care plans for children.	5 May 2023
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; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(b)) In particular, risk management plans should be individualised to each child and clearly identify all specific risks.	5 May 2023
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—	5 May 2023

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (2)(c)(h)) In particular, the manager must ensure she has full oversight across all children's records, and that staff are suitably trained.	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they maintain good employment practice in respect of recruitment of staff that safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC035954

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Metropolitan Borough of Wirral

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 Gadsby, Social Care Inspector

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Manchester
M1 2WD

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