

SC035954

Registered provider: Metropolitan Borough of Wirral

Interim 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 registered manager post has been vacant since November 2021. A new manager has been appointed. She is not yet registered with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 30 March 2022

Date of last inspection: 12 October 2021

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged requires improvement to be good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judged that it has improved effectiveness.

There has been some instability in leadership and management in this home. Following the last inspection, the registered manager and responsible individual left the organisation. The previous responsible individual returned to the organisation and took over the day-to-day management of the home. An experienced deputy manager has stepped up to the role of manager, although she is yet to submit her application to be registered with Ofsted.

Leaders and managers make child-centred decisions about children coming to live in and stay at this home. Since the last inspection, two children have started accessing short breaks and one child has moved into the home permanently. Staff are working with other professionals to support one child who is moving on from the home, ensuring that the right support is in place for her when she leaves.

Staff support children to do things they enjoy during their time at this home, such as going to theme parks or for picnics in the park. Children spend time in the community with staff, bowling and visiting the theatre. Records have been reviewed, and now better capture children's day-to-day activities and experiences.

Staff support children to spend time with people who are important to them. They work flexibly to ensure that arrangements work well for children and families. One child's parent said, 'No matter who you talk to you get the same level of care. He [child] is safe. They [staff] care about us as a family.'

Staff have a good understanding of children's specific needs and vulnerabilities and take appropriate action to keep children safe. Since the last inspection, leaders have made progress to improve the quality of children's risk management plans. These plans now reflect known and emerging risks to children and provide staff with clear strategies to follow to minimise these risks.

Staff are able to identify and respond to subtle changes in children's behaviours. This largely prevents incidents from escalating and physical intervention is undertaken only as a last resort. Following any incidents, staff practice and the strategies used are reviewed to ensure that these are appropriate for children.

Steps have been taken to strengthen partnership working with other professionals. During the inspection, good communication was observed between staff and relevant professionals, such as children's schools. Children's records viewed were up to date and signed by the author of each entry.

Following the last inspection, the responsible individual devised an action plan to address the shortfalls that were identified. This included a review of all children's files. However, the effectiveness of the monitoring systems in place is variable. For example, not all children have up-to-date education, health and care plans. This had not been identified in the audits that have been undertaken.

New staff have been recruited since the last inspection. The responsible individual and manager have reviewed the induction process for new staff to ensure that they have a clear understanding of the home's ethos and objectives. However, shortfalls in the recruitment of staff were identified. Discrepancies were noted between references and information on the member of staff's application form regarding their work history. Furthermore, the reasons why staff's previous employment ended have not always been explored.

The organisation has sourced a new online training platform to improve the training offer for staff. Training specific to the individual needs of children living and staying in the home has been undertaken and further bespoke training is scheduled. The current recording system in place limits the manager's ability to monitor effectively the training that staff have undertaken. Steps have been taken to address this to ensure that the manager has effective oversight of the skills and training of all staff.

Information is compiled on a monthly basis to feed into the quality of care review. Inspectors saw that the information had been gathered in readiness for this report, however, the report had not been sent to the regulator within the timescales required by regulation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/10/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
08/01/2020	Full	Outstanding
18/12/2018	Full	Outstanding
01/11/2017	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
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(f)(h)) In particular, the registered person must ensure there are staff who are suitably trained to care for children and that there are effective monitoring systems in place to ensure that there is oversight of all aspects of the day-to-day running of the home.	12 May 2022
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—	12 May 2022

that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(c)) The registered person must ensure that they have relevant local authority documentation for children in their care.	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. (Regulation 32 (1)) The registered person must ensure that relevant checks are undertaken before staff start working in the home, in order to ensure children's safety.	12 May 2022
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality-of-care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a) (5)) In particular, the registered person must review the quality of care, including obtaining feedback from stakeholders, to drive forward improvements in the home. The registered person should ensure that reports are sent to HMCI every six months.	12 May 2022

Information about this inspection

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full 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: Metropolitan Borough of Wirral

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

Responsible individual: Debra Kewley

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Genevieve O'Reilly, Social Care Inspector
Claire Hobbs, Social Care Inspector

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