

SC036026

Registered provider: Sheffield City Council

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a local authority. It provides care for up to five children who may have social and/or emotional difficulties.

In addition to supporting children already in care, the home acts as a bridging placement to allow children to achieve permanence in a foster family, with birth family, or for older young people, in the community. There are two children currently living at the home.

The children living at this home have done so for a considerable time. Plans to help children to progress to more permanent living arrangements are not yet in place.

The manager is qualified and experienced and has been registered with Ofsted since February 2020.

Inspection date: 17 November 2022

Date of last inspection: 17 May 2022

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.

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

Staff show tenacity and commitment in their approach to caring for the children and role model the importance of having positive relationships. They frequently speak with the children about the benefits of showing respect to one another and the importance of having safe relationships. However, the effectiveness of this approach varies. For example, there has been a reduction in serious behavioural incidents in the home for one child, whilst another child is currently staying away from the home not wanting to return.

Children speak with staff about their individual needs. Staff discuss topics such as keeping safe in the community, future aspirations and the importance of personal care. These types of discussions help children to consider the impact their decision-making can have on their current experience and future prospects.

Children are supported to develop independence skills that will help them in the future. Detailed individual plans demonstrate children's learning objectives. Children learn how to do their food shopping, meal planning and budgeting to make their money last longer. For one child, this has provided them with a positive focus.

Staff are unable to help children to consistently attend school. One child has been out of education for a considerable time without any other form of learning at the home. For the second child, their attendance at school recently stopped as they are staying away from the home. This may have an impact on the children's future education or employment opportunities.

Staff advocate for the children and make sure their wishes and feelings are known. The responsible individual visited one child to listen to their wishes and frustrations about living at this home. When aspects of child's requests could not be met, they were helped to understand why.

Staff work hard to provide children with a comfortable living space. Regular upkeep of the building, and timely repairs and decoration of the home, reduce the impact of the damage that has often been caused.

The safety of children

There continues to be a strong multi-agency approach to reviewing and evaluating the concerns for a child and their associated high-risk behaviours. Risks to the child in the community are well known, and regular information-sharing between the staff

and other safeguarding professionals ensures that the child's plan is up to date. Multi-agency decisions made about the child's care align with their known risks and are focused on keeping the child safe. This is helping the child's local authority to consider the actions needed in response to the known behaviours.

Staff respond effectively to missing from home incidents. Staff follow children's risk assessments when incidents occur. When the response from partner agencies does not support the staff to follow the child's safety plan, the home's service manager escalates their concerns to the relevant agency. This promotes a culture of shared accountability and responsibility to better protect children.

Staff complete safe and well checks for one child who stays away from the home overnight. This provides staff with some assurances that the child is safe.

Incidents requiring staff to hold children have reduced. When incidents do occur, staff use a restorative process with the children to agree a way forward. This helps children to repair their relationship with staff and build trust in knowing staff will support them to work things through.

The guidance and direction from staff to children about the dangers associated with smoking in their bedrooms has not had an impact or deterred children from doing so. When children refuse to take part in fire evacuation drills, staff talk to them to remind them of their expectations in the event of a real fire. However, staff have not fully considered additional fire-reduction strategies in the children's bedrooms to further reduce the potential risk of a fire occurring.

Staff have spoken with the children about the dangers associated with social media and online safety. However, this is not fully embedded as part of the team's safeguarding culture. Children's risk assessments are limited in the guidance to staff about risk reduction strategies to keep children safe online.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

The manager provides strong leadership to the team. The supportive culture she has developed has helped to galvanise staff relationships. This has had a positive impact on staff's behaviour management practice and has enhanced their confidence when responding to children's challenging behaviours.

Staff feel well supported by the management team and speak highly of the supportive culture that has been established. Staff are helped to reflect on their practice and consider the impact they have on the children. One staff member said, 'I can't fault the support. Managers have been brilliant.'

Managers have continued to share their serious concerns for the children's safety at care planning meetings and strategy discussions. They keep all relevant professionals up to date about the children's risks and needs. This assists senior managers to make decisions about the children's care plan.

The manager's internal monitoring helps to develop the service. The quality of care review provides a clear narrative about the children's experiences, and the concerns the manager has for their welfare. However, seeking feedback from the children, parents and professionals is inconsistent. This limits the manager's ability to continue to make improvements in the home.

The manager has shown strong leadership in meeting the requirements issued at the last inspection. Requirements in relation to the quality of décor, repairs to damaged parts of the building, and staff member's knowledges and skills of using restorative practice have been addressed. This demonstrates good learning from inspection activity.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/05/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
24/08/2021	Full	Good
15/10/2019	Full	Good
12/09/2018	Full	Good

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff understand each child's associated risks with the internet and record the risk management strategies in the child's risk assessment. They should also ensure that staff develop the children's awareness by adopting regular conversations about staying safe online as part of the team's safeguarding culture. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.19)
- The registered person should ensure that there are sufficient fire safety arrangements in the children's bedrooms to reduce the risks associated with children smoking in their bedrooms. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should consider what measures they can take to ensure that they seek and attain feedback from key stakeholders to support the quality of care review. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC036026

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sheffield City Council

Registered provider address: Sheffield City Council, Town Hall, Pinstone Street, Sheffield S1 2HH

Responsible individual: Sally Williams

Registered manager: Jill Guess

Inspector

Aaron Mcloughlin, Social Care Inspector

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