

SC036026

Registered provider: Sheffield City Council

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

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 May 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 24 August 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/08/2021	Full	Good
15/10/2019	Full	Good
12/09/2018	Full	Good
25/07/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

The quality of care for children at this home is not yet good enough. Staff work hard to try to make the home a place where children can feel happy and comfortable. However, children are frustrated about their day-to-day experiences. One child said, 'It's chaos at times. There's always damage, sometimes I don't even want to go downstairs.'

Staff care about the children and want them to succeed. They work tirelessly with them to build positive and trusting relationships. However, there is a disparity with regards to the positive influence staff have on children. For example, the impact of staff's meaningful conversations does not consistently help children to make progress or feel well cared for and listened to.

The staff's ability to support children to engage with their education and learning varies. They struggle to help children who experience difficulties with learning to take part in their alternative learning programme at home. This limits the children's educational prospects. Other children have been helped to make significant progress by attending school five days a week, after a long period of being absent.

Staff are unable to consistently help children to access the health support they need. However, staff are well connected to health services and create the opportunities for children to go to their appointments. When children do not attend, staff talk to them about the impact this can have on their physical and emotional well-being.

Staff help children to keep in touch with their family members and assist in developing their relationships. Parents value the input from staff and recognise the impact they have had. One parent said, 'My child's key worker has gone above and beyond. I wouldn't know how to thank him for what he has done for us.'

The input from the on-site clinical psychologist has helped one child to have a formal diagnosis in recognition of their needs. The clinical collaboration with the staff team, and guidance provided to the child's school and family, has helped to broaden the knowledge of the staff and other adults to have a better understanding of the child's needs.

Children can take part in a variety of activities that they enjoy. This helps to develop their self-esteem and provides them with new experiences as they explore different hobbies and interests.

A monthly magazine, individualised to each child, affords staff the opportunity to speak to children about important topics, such as knife crime. Staff listen to the children's requests and celebrate their achievements. The creative forum that enables children to share their views is yet to be embedded.

Damage has occurred around the house and in the children's bedrooms, and children smoke in the home. The boundaries and restorative practices that staff use have not been effective at deterring these behaviours. This does not make it feel homely.

The children become frustrated due to the Wi-Fi connection in the home which does not ensure a consistent connection and limits their ability to relax.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

There is a strong multi-agency approach to assessing and evaluating the children's risks to help mitigate against some of the dangers. However, for one child, risks are not reducing, and concerns continue to escalate.

Staff struggle to keep all children safe due to the complex nature of the threats and violence that occur. This is impacting on the safety and well-being of the other children living in the home. The help the children receive to cope with their emotions does not result in a sustained positive behavioural change.

Not all strategies used by staff to de-escalate children's behaviours are appropriate. For example, on a couple of occasions, staff have turned off the electricity supply to the children's bedroom. On a separate occasion, a staff member neglected their responsibility to take part in a restorative conversation with a child. This does not help children to develop the skills to resolve conflicts.

Staff have not fully considered the children's risks in relation to social media and internet safety. This limits their ability to understand what help the children need to stay safe online so that more-focused conversations can occur.

Behaviour plans and risk assessments, written in consultation with the clinical psychologist, provide guidance and direction for staff on how to keep children safe. There are clear thresholds for when staff should escalate their concerns to other agencies, such as the police, and what actions they can take to avoid incidents escalating to the point where children and staff will be at risk of harm.

There are frequent restraints for one child. Staff ensure that the holds are proportionate in response to the level of risk during the incidents. Detailed records enable the manager to evaluate the effectiveness of staff practice. Debriefs conducted with children and staff enable them all to learn from these incidents with an aim of preventing repeat occurrences.

There is a well-coordinated response to children being missing from home. Staff follow agreed protocols when a child's whereabouts are unknown and work with the police to locate them. Return home interviews are conducted by an independent person so that children can talk about their experience and disclose any concerns.

Good communication between the providers and other agencies ensures that there is a shared approach to keeping children safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by an experienced and committed manager who provides strong leadership to the team. The manager has maintained the team's aspirational culture for wanting the best for the children.

Staff supervision is child focused, empathetic and supportive. This helps the staff to cope with some of the demands their role can bring. Staff value and appreciate the leadership and guidance they receive from their managers. One staff member said, 'As a team, we are very supportive of one another. Regarding my management team, they are awesome.' Another staff member said, 'Managers are very approachable and available to discuss anything.'

The on-site clinical psychologist provides direct support to staff to develop their understanding of children's journeys and their individualised needs. This is helping staff to remain focused and better understand the therapeutic support that children need.

Team meetings provide staff with a forum to discuss the operational aspects of the home. Staff are encouraged to reflect on their practice, such as the strategies they use to engage children positively. Explorative conversations are led by the manager, so staff have a shared awareness about the children and their plans.

The manager ensures that notifications of significant events that relate to the welfare and protection of children are made to the appropriate agencies. This helps professionals to have a shared awareness of the children's needs and agree on the strategies needed to help the children to be safe.

Children's case records are completed to a high standard. Detailed key-work sessions provide children with a reflective account of their achievements and the care that they receive from staff. The style and clarity of recordings mean that children have an increased understanding about their time living in the home.

The staff team has yet to fulfil the ethos and objectives of the service delivered to the children, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. This limits staff's effectiveness in helping the children to make progress.

The manager's quality of care review does not include the views of the children, parents, professionals and staff. This limits the manager's ability to continue to make improvements in the home.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; protect and promote each child's welfare; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect; help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult; provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; provide to children personal items that are appropriate for their age and understanding; and	17 July 2022

ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(c)(i)(ii)) The registered person must also ensure that: the environment enables children to relax, flourish and enjoy the help available to them; the Wi-Fi in the home is sufficient to enhance the children’s living experience; children receive support to maintain their bedrooms responsive to their needs. Bedrooms must be well decorated and have an ongoing programme of repair.	
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child’s behaviour, in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child’s behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child’s age and understanding;	17 July 2022

help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful; help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship; strive to gain each child's respect and trust; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children; that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)(xi)(b)) The registered person must also ensure that: staff are provided with training to ensure that they have the skills to manage behaviour and de-escalate behaviour effectively; staff understand their responsibilities to be a role model to children on how to resolve incidents of conflict by using restorative practice; and staff do not turn off the electricity supply to the children's bedrooms as a way of managing behaviour.	
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—	17 July 2022

lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) The registered person must ensure that children living at the home are cared for in line with the intervention model described in the home's statement of purpose.	
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 (5))	17 July 2022

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff understand each child's associated risks with the internet so that appropriate risk management strategies can be agreed. They should also ensure that staff develop the children's awareness through 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)

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: SC036026

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Carly Speechley

Registered manager: Jill Guess

Inspector

Aaron Mcloughlin, Social Care Inspector

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