

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 and provides care and accommodation 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.

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

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020. We last visited this setting on 26 January 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 24 to 25 August 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 15 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/10/2019	Full	Good
12/09/2018	Full	Good
25/07/2017	Full	Good
30/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children benefit from individualised care from dependable staff who want the best for them. Staff support the children through all stages of their journey. Children say that they like living at the home. One parent said that the staff are 'doing a brilliant job'. Two older young people have left the home in recent months. Staff continue to provide them with regular support. This benefits the young people's need for independence with the guidance from familiar, positive, adult role models.

The staff support the children to attend school. Children who experience difficulties that affect their school attendance participate in alternative learning programmes that the staff team facilitates. This provides enrichment and practical skills. The staff team works closely with the virtual school and education providers. This enables the staff to advocate for the children so that they can reach their full potential. An older young person who lives close by has secured employment prior to leaving the home, which gives them a sense of achievement.

The staff encourage the children to invest in their health by supporting them to attend health appointments and live a healthy lifestyle. Children's engagement in their health plans fluctuates. Staff encourage children to access services to help them to stop smoking cigarettes and misuse substances.

Effective partnerships with the on-site clinical psychologist and speech and language therapist offer a range of support services to the staff team, the children and families. Staff also work with specialist health professionals, which is helping them to address some of the children's complex needs. The communication tools that health professionals have devised help the staff to talk to children in an easy way about topics, such as the court process, sexual health, the age of consent and the law, and other sensitive matters.

Staff encourage the children to engage in a broad range of activities. Children have enjoyed trips away, meals out and outdoor pursuits. Photos of one child's recent trip to London with staff capture the positive memories and experiences. Children have a say about their plans and the running of the home. The children's meeting minutes do not confirm how the children's views have been acted on.

Staff help children to keep in touch with family members, which reinforces the children's sense of identity. One child is staying with their parent. The staff make welfare checks on the child regularly, which promotes their safety and welfare. Another child's decline in their health, education and behavioural progress is linked to the negative influence of a family member and other people in the community. The pull is such that they are spending less time at the home. The registered manager is monitoring the progress of the search for the child to move from the home. This action should prevent any unnecessary delay that could hinder the child

from flourishing in a new home. No more children will be placed at the home until the matter is resolved.

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

The staff know the children well and have detailed knowledge of each child's complex behaviours, risks and vulnerabilities. This helps the staff to promote the children's safety and welfare and to share concerns with other agencies. Professionals and a parent have expressed their satisfaction that the staff team is making every effort to keep the children safe.

Children's risks are clearly assessed, recorded and understood by the staff team. Children's safety plans support the staff to maintain a consistent approach in protecting the children from threats, such as criminal exploitation and incidents in the community. The staff know how to de-escalate the children's behaviours to reduce any assaults towards the staff. The regular multi-agency meetings attended by staff ensure that children's risk-taking behaviours are shared and disrupted where possible to mitigate the risks.

Staff talk to children about any disruptive or concerning behaviour. This has led to one child learning to self-regulate their behaviour and develop the art of negotiation with the staff. Despite the resilience, persistence and care that staff have shown towards another child, the staff have acknowledged with senior managers that they cannot continue to manage the physical threats and aggression effectively.

Good staffing levels enable the staff to carry out welfare checks and speak to the children through face-to-face visits and telephone calls. The staff seek assurances that children are safe when they are not at home and children are encouraged to return. Missing from care protocols are followed to ensure that children return home safely.

Staff carry out room searches, which promotes everyone's health and safety in the home. Physical intervention is applied appropriately. However, not all of the records include debriefs with the children and staff and not all have management oversight. This means that staff and children are not always supported to share any concerns and learn from these incidents to prevent them from happening in the future. Furthermore, without consistent management oversight, it is unclear if the practice is safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager and deputy are both qualified and experienced and work together effectively. The managers are supported by the skilled, competent and motivated staff who know the children well.

The condition of the premises has deteriorated over recent months. Damage has occurred around the house and in the children's bedrooms. This detracts from a

homely atmosphere overall. It does not serve the interests of children and does not accord with the statement of purpose.

A recent incident involving a child's access to weapons has not been considered by the registered manager as a potential radicalisation and extremism threat. There has been no recent training for staff on this matter. This does not ensure that the staff are alert to these issues so that they can act on their suspicions. The registered manager has taken remedial action in response to this matter.

The requirements have not been met fully. Two of the requirements pertain to behaviour management issues. One requirement that relates to care planning is repeated because no children have moved into the home since the monitoring visit, and therefore it cannot be assessed. The registered manager's review of the quality of care does not include the views of the children, parents, professionals and staff. This can make it difficult for the registered manager to continue to make improvements in the home. The statement of purpose has not been updated to reflect recent changes.

Recruitment practices are not sufficiently robust. Gaps in the verification records do not include the reason why the employment or position ended in previous employment roles with children and vulnerable adults.

Allegations against staff are managed appropriately in consultation with the local authority and the police.

Staff are well supported in their care of the children through supervision, team meetings, handovers and peer support. One staff member said, '[Name of the home] is a really nice home with an A1 staff team.' Similarly, professionals and a parent comment in positive terms about the relationship with the staff team and the quality of the communication.

The registered manager demonstrates a firm commitment to the children. This has remained during the coronavirus pandemic and when it has been challenging to engage with some children when they have not been making the desired progress.

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— provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(vii)) In particular, ensure that the home is decorated and furnished to a high standard throughout.	8 October 2021
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—	8 October 2021

meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(xi)) In particular, ensure that members of staff are provided with the skills to manage behaviour effectively. This is a repeated requirement.	
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; 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)(h)) Specifically, ensure that the staff team receives up-to-date radicalisation and extremism training. Improve the content of the children's meeting records to clearly show how their wishes and feelings are responded to.	30 September 2021
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)) This is in relation to only accepting placements for children when the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans, and when the impact that the placement will have on the existing	30 September 2021

group of children and young people has been properly considered. This is a repeated requirement.	
The registered person must ensure that— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so (“the authorised person”)— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) This is a repeated requirement.	17 September 2021
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))	8 October 2021

Recommendations

- The registered manager should be responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. (‘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: SC036026

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual:

Registered manager: Jill Guess

Inspector

Jacqueline Malcolm, Social Care Inspector

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