

SC036240

Registered provider: Derby City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to six children who need support with social and emotional difficulties. The home is owned and operated by a local authority.

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 May 2023

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	requires improvement to be 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: 8 February 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/02/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
09/11/2021	Full	Good
15/04/2019	Full	Good
01/05/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

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

Children live in a spacious home. They all have bedrooms personalised to meet their individual needs. The home has several shared areas that allow for children to have the space to be alone or with the wider group. Some areas need redecoration so children can be proud of and fully enjoy their home. The manager has plans to improve the physical conditions and to make this a more welcoming space. Indeed, the required improvements have already started.

Children's engagement in education is prioritised by staff. Children are now attending school or accessing tutors at home. Managers communicate well with schools, allowing for bespoke approaches to learning to be established for children. Children's successes are celebrated and praised by managers and staff. This encourages their attendance at school and motivates them to learn.

Children's care plans set out the needs of children in the context of their past experiences. They offer advice on how staff can engage children and de-escalate more challenging behaviours. However, several members of staff are new and not always confident in their understanding of the care plans or how best to keep children safe. This area requires improvement.

The home has a separate living space for one older child to learn skills for independent living. Care planning for this child is not sufficiently structured or clear. Consequently, staff do not clearly understand their caring responsibilities for this child. Furthermore, the conditions in the child's living space were not clean or well maintained. This child is not being meaningfully prepared for independence or adulthood.

Children do not always have the opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings. Children's meetings vary in quality and attendance. Individual key-work sessions rarely take place. As a result, there are missed opportunities to talk and reflect with children on changes in the home or indeed following any incidents. Additionally, this means children are not currently able to influence the care they are offered in the home or to explore any worries they may have.

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

Children rarely go missing from care. When this happens, incidents tend to be for short periods, and children usually return home of their own accord. Children have individual risk assessments that set out necessary steps for staff to take to keep children safe. Children are not always offered a warm response on their return. Debriefs are not always taking place in a focused manner, meaning that children are not being discouraged from going missing again.

Staff resort to using physical intervention with children as a last resort, and these are infrequent. Records do not always reflect the actions taken by staff to distract or de-escalate more challenging behaviours from children. It is therefore difficult to understand the full context of incidents. Children are not consistently offered the chance to talk through with staff after such incidents. As a result, opportunities to reflect and learn are missed.

There have been several serious incidents in this home. Staff have not always been proactive in exploring the impact of incidents on children and providing them with reassurance. Children are not supported to understand their feelings over incidents, and one child said that they did not feel safe. Additionally, managers have taken appropriate action when the behaviour and conduct of staff has fallen below expectation.

The staff speak highly of the children and want them to reach their full potential. Trusting relationships are beginning to develop between the children and staff, and children could identify people who they could talk to. However, there have been significant changes with several new staff members joining the team. Children have experienced changes to the staff team and see this as a loss. This is not yet being properly considered, nor is the right support being provided to children to manage these changes.

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

The home has been without a registered manager for a considerable period. The registration of a suitable manager is an important regulatory requirement. The acting manager and deputy manager are relatively new to these positions. They are ambitious and accept that some areas need improvement. The management team is well respected by staff, who feel supported by them. Staff report that they enjoy working at the home and morale is good.

Staff have not been provided with regular supervision meetings with their manager. When concerns have been raised in supervision sessions, these have not always been followed up by the manager. Team meetings are not regularly taking place. Staff do not have the appropriate space to discuss their concerns, the children or to develop their learning. Opportunities to reflect on and adapt staff practice is not consistently available to staff.

There is a lack of management oversight of recording, and some fundamental tasks are not being completed. As a result, staff are not able to identify areas requiring development, and some care practices require improvement to prevent them from becoming embedded. The manager recognises this and has plans to improve practices across several areas of care practice.

The manager completes audits in many areas of the day-to-day functioning of the home. However, this is not being utilised fully to track progress or patterns of

behaviour for children. As a result, the manager does not currently have effective oversight of the home.

Managers are well supported by senior leaders and are offered regular supervision and advice. They are accepting of the improvements needed to the home and are aspirational for change to ensure children make progress and have good experiences.

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 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 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)(b)) This specifically refers to the living conditions of the independence flat being unclean and the need for staff to ensure records of incidents are clear, detailed and demonstrate management oversight, reflection and learning. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	26 May 2023
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and the registered provider— is an organisation or a partnership; does not satisfy regulation 28; or is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home. If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of— the name of the person so appointed; and	26 May 2023

the date on which the appointment takes effect. (Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii) (2)(a)(b)) This specifically refers to there being no registered manager in position since March 2022.	
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 specifically refers to a lack of planning for children who are on a pathway to independence and the need to ensure that children are moved on from the home positively.	26 May 2023
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c)) This particularly refers to supervision of staff and team meetings not taking place regularly and identified concerns in supervision not always being followed up. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	26 May 2023
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. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)) This particularly refers to a lack of understanding by staff of the details of children's care plans and knowledge of the needs of children.	26 May 2023

The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— develop positive relationships with them; engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c)) This particularly refers to a lack of key-work sessions and consultation with children to ascertain their wishes and feelings about the care they receive.	26 May 2023
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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: SC036240

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Derby City Council, Treasurers Department, Council House, Corporation Street, DERBY DE1 2FE

Responsible individual: Sharon Green

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Louise Copping, Social Care Inspector
Alli Tandy, Social Care Inspector

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