

SC037657

Registered provider: Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in December 2020.

Inspection date: 5 April 2022

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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 11 January 2022

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
11/01/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
24/04/2019	Full	Good
19/04/2018	Full	Good
24/05/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of the inspection, one child was living at the home. A child-centred decision was made to temporarily put new admissions to the home on hold. This has enabled staff to focus solely on the child and invest their time in preparing the child for their imminent move to semi-independent living.

Staff prepare children well for adulthood and independence. They equip them with essential life skills, such as shopping, cooking, cleaning and budgeting. Additionally, the manager and staff ensure that when children leave care, they have a strong network of support around them, including, where necessary, adult social care, therapeutic support and additional financial support. This ensures that children's move to independence is a positive and successful experience.

The manager and staff provide a stable, secure and homely living environment. Staff's warm, nurturing care and support help children to develop a sense of belonging. This is reflected in a child's comments: 'I think the new young people who move into the home will really enjoy living here as it is really homely and welcoming, and it doesn't feel like a children's home.'

Staff have a thorough understanding of the child's needs and interests. They provide consistent personalised care and support. When children struggle to access suitable training and employment, staff link them in with relevant professionals, such as employability officers, who provide them with expert guidance and support. This has helped the current child to identify and apply for a place on an apprenticeship that reflects their particular interests.

The home's care plan is sufficiently detailed and clearly reflects the child's needs, background and progress. These records are important tools for helping children to understand their journey and develop a positive self-identity.

The manager and staff are aspirational and support and encourage the child to progress and succeed. For example, they have enabled the child to take driving lessons and they celebrate and reward achievements, no matter how small.

Staff support the child to keep in touch with people who are important to them. They work proactively with parents and social workers to promote safe family time. Additionally, staff welcome the child's friends to the home, where appropriate.

The child enjoys spending time with staff and doing various activities, such as gardening and visits to the beach and cinema. These joint activities are helping staff to build and sustain positive relationships with the child.

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

The child living at the home is safe and feels safe. They trust staff and are able to talk to them about any worries or concerns.

Staff provide consistent advice, guidance and support, which is helping the child to make safer choices and resolve any conflict with others safely. This is reflected in the child's comments: 'Staff have always made sure that I am safe and well. I feel safe and secure in my home. I am confident that I can discuss any problems I have with staff.'

Staff understand the child's vulnerabilities and assess risk thoroughly. When concerns arise, which is extremely rare, staff act swiftly and ensure that all relevant professionals are informed. This prompts a well-coordinated joint approach to risk-management.

Clear and consistent boundaries, coupled with regular discussions with the child about risk, are helping staff to reduce risky behaviours in the home, such as smoking. Staff promote positive behaviour effectively. The use of restraint has not been necessary for some time.

Staff are positive role models for children. Their consistent support, calm approach and nurturing care ensure that the home is a settled, peaceful and safe environment.

Since the last inspection, staff-recruitment practice has improved. The manager now verifies the reasons for leaving previous employment that involved working with children. Furthermore, suitable references are obtained and Disclosure and Barring Service checks are clearly evidenced on staff files. These improvements are enhancing children's welfare and safety in the home.

In the main, health and safety checks in the home are undertaken regularly, such as fire alarm checks and the servicing of appliances. However, safety in the home is being undermined by some minor delays in updating the fire risk assessment and the electrical installation check. During the inspection, the manager took swift action and made arrangements for these checks to be undertaken. The manager's monitoring of these checks needs to improve.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by an experienced, child-focused and aspirational registered manager. She is working towards obtaining the relevant management qualification. An experienced deputy supports her with the day-to-day running of the home.

The staff team is stable and content and staff are committed to the child in their care. They are good listeners. This ensures that children's views, wishes and feelings are heard. The manager and staff are strong advocates for children.

The staff describe a settled, supportive and happy work environment. New staff are suitably inducted into their role. All staff receive regular professional supervision. Additionally, they are provided with ample opportunities to think and talk about their practice, learn from each other and continuously develop. As a result, team working is strong.

The manager and staff communicate with external professionals and parents regularly. This ensures that all relevant people are kept updated on the child's progress and any changes or concerns.

Staff are provided with a range of relevant, high-quality training. Staff's knowledge and expertise could be further developed with training around radicalisation, substance misuse and online safety.

Staff are highly experienced and they have achieved various qualifications. However, the manager has not assessed whether all staff's qualifications meet the regulatory requirements. As a result, she cannot provide assurances that all staff are suitably qualified.

The home's statement of purpose is regularly updated to reflect any changes. It clearly outlines the home's aims and objectives and how they will be met. However, it does not adequately reflect all staff's qualifications as required.

The manager and deputy regularly monitor the quality of care provided in the home, which includes monthly audits. However, the monitoring of health and safety checks in the home is not sufficiently robust. Consequently, there have been delays in getting some essential checks updated.

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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) This relates to ensuring that the manager's monitoring of health and safety checks in the home and staff's qualifications is robust.	22 May 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home's statement of purpose provides sufficient detail about staff's qualifications. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.5)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access resources and training on radicalisation, substance misuse and online safety. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff in a care role have the qualification as set out in regulation 32(4), or equivalent. The term 'equivalent' will be a judgement for the registered person based on whether the content of any qualifications held by staff closely corresponds with the qualifications set out in regulation. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraphs 10.12 and 10.13)

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: SC037657

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Registered provider address: Knowsley MBC, Children's Services, Huyton
Municipal Buildings, 6th Floor, Huyton, Knowsley, Merseyside L36 9YU

Responsible individual: Karen Jude

Registered manager: Jane Vowles

Inspector

Marina Tully, Social Care Inspector

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