

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 and accommodation for three children and young people who have social and emotional difficulties.

The registered manager has been registered since March 2017.

Inspection dates: 24 to 25 April 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

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

Date of last inspection: 19 April 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/04/2018	Full	Good
24/05/2017	Full	Good
07/02/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
24/11/2016	Full	Good

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
(1) If the person who is in day-to-day charge of the children's home proposes to be absent from the home for a continuous period of 28 days or more, the registered person must give notice in writing to HMCI of the proposed absence. (2) Except in the case of an emergency or unforeseen absence, a notice under paragraph (1) must— (a) be given no later than one month before the proposed absence commences, or within such shorter period as may be agreed with HMCI; and (b) specify with respect to the proposed absence— (i) its length or expected length; (ii) the reason for it; (iii) the arrangements which have been made for running the home during the absence; the address, name and qualifications of the person who will be responsible for the home during the absence; and (v) in the case of the absence of the registered manager, the arrangements that have been, or are proposed to be, made for appointing another person to manage the home during the absence, including the proposed date by which the appointment is to be made. (3) If the absence arises as a result of an emergency or is unforeseen, the registered person must give notice of the absence— (a) within one week of the beginning of the absence; and (b) specifying the matters in paragraph (2)(b). (4) If the notice required under paragraph (2) or (3) has not been given as required, it must be given without delay. (5) The registered person must notify HMCI of the return to duty of the person in day-to-day charge of the home not later than 7 days after the date of that person's return. (Regulation 48 (1)(2)(3)(4)(5))	24/04/2019

Recommendations

- Staff must help each child to prepare to live independently. This includes supporting the child to develop emotional and mental resilience to cope without the home's support ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27). In particular, ensure that staff engage and encourage children to develop their practical skills such as cooking, housework, managing money and personal care.
- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11). In particular, ensure that children's views about their experiences living in the home and the care that they receive should be seen in the review of the quality of care report. Furthermore, the report should show how children's views have been acted on to improve the quality of care they receive.
- Staff should understand factors that affect children's motivation and ability to engage with adults. Staff should have the capacity and competence to encourage children to accept and benefit from the help available to them ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.13). In particular, ensure that staff enable children to make well-informed choices about their health and well-being.
- The registered person must make sure that the quality of care review focuses on the quality of care provided by the home, the experiences of the children living there and analyses the impact the care is having on outcomes and improvements for children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people live in a nurturing and supportive home. Staff provide young people with a high quality of individualised care that is tailored to meet their assessed needs.

The staff encourage and support young people with complex needs to enjoy positive experiences, and they make remarkable progress. For some young people, what seem to be small steps have been remarkable achievements. These include, for example, young people engaging and cooperating with the youth offending service, talking about resuming their education, and making positive choices not to go missing from home.

Staff make sure that young people get the best opportunities to do well in education. They help young people to study and access extra help when they need it with reading and mathematics. Staff keep a close eye on young people's progress at school. They

work closely with teachers and the virtual school to make sure that young people receive the right help to support their learning and development.

The staff have helped a young person to finish school with qualifications and to secure a full-time job. This has given the young person a tremendous sense of achievement. He loves earning his own money, learning new skills and helping other people.

The staff carefully listen to young people's views, wishes and worries, and respond to meet them appropriately. Young people are involved in making choices about their lives, their health, education, way in which they spend their free-time and their plans for their future.

The manager and staff work effectively as part of the wider support network to plan for and make good decisions about young people's care. The manager makes sure that staff have the right skills and experience to respond effectively to young people's needs.

The staff make sure that young people receive a warm welcome when they first move in. This approach helps young people to quickly feel at home. Young people choose how to decorate their bedrooms and can make them into their own space. The staff quickly get to know young people and find out what is important to them. The staff make sure that young people have fun and can take part in things that they enjoy, such as martial arts, football, horse riding and spending time with friends. An independent reviewing officer said, 'I visited the young person not long after she moved in, and it was the happiest I have seen her. It was refreshing to see her chatty and happy.'

The staff work exceptionally well with young people's families so that they can play an important part in their children's lives. The staff encourage and support young people to see their parents, brothers and sisters and to stay overnight with them. They make sure that this is a safe and positive experience and one which improves relationships and strives to support young people to return to live permanently with their families.

Young people receive good advice, support and services that help them to learn the skills and to develop the resilience that they will need as they get older. The staff make sure that young people have documents they need for adult life, including a passport, provisional driving license and a bank account. Staff work hard to find ways to encourage young people to develop their skills. For example, they successfully helped a young person to plan and cook a meal for his sister.

However, at times, staff struggle to engage young people in preparing for adult life, including managing money and budgeting and making well-informed choices about their health and well-being. Staff do not always find out the factors that are affecting young people's motivation. Neither do they create sufficient opportunities and provide enough incentives to encourage young people to take part in preparing for the next stage in their lives.

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

The staff's knowledge and professional practice protect young people from harm. The staff have a good understanding of each young person's vulnerabilities and any of concerns about their safety. The staff recognise signs that young people are at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. They continually assess the risks for each young person and take every necessary step to make sure that young people are protected.

The manager and staff take decisive action when they are worried about young people being at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation, going missing from home and drug use. They escalate their concerns to the local authority, the youth offending service and the police. The staff use well-established safeguarding partnerships to identify and understand the risks and follow safety plans to deal with the dangers.

The staff help young people to be aware of risks and to manage their safety. For example, the staff help young people to think about the effect of using cannabis, including the dangers to their health and personal safety and the possible consequences for their education and employment. Staff help young people to learn from mistakes and to make better choices in the future.

The staff provide young people with the warmth, structure and consistent boundaries that they need to feel safe and emotionally secure. Staff are safe and dependable adults. Young people talk to staff when they are worried or upset. They know that staff listen and care about them and will do everything they can to help them. A social worker said, 'The young person feels safe because he knows that staff have his back.'

The staff work positively with young people to find the best way possible to support, empower and help them. They intervene calmly and confidently. A social worker said, 'Staff helped the young person to regulate her emotions. They did the right things to bring her down. They gave her time to calm down, so she could talk things through.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is highly experienced and appropriately qualified. He provides clear and consistent leadership. He also manages another children's home. He is well organised and manages both homes effectively.

However, the local authority did not tell Ofsted that the registered manager was away from work for over 28 days in February and March 2019 or about the arrangements for the management of the homes during his absence.

The manager and staff are ambitious for young people to live in a safe, stable and nurturing home. Young people have the continuity of care necessary to enable them to build secure and healthy relationships with the adults looking after them.

Caring, experienced and qualified staff provide young people with the understanding and help they need to develop and grow. The staff work together cohesively to make sure

that the arrangements for young people's care are well-planned and meet their individual needs.

The manager provides the staff with excellent support, guidance and encouragement that improve their professional practice. Staff use regular practice-related supervision and team meetings to reflect on young people's progress. They use these meetings exceptionally well to think about how to improve the support they give to young people, and to consider how they deal with difficult situations and how they manage the emotional impact of their work.

The responsible individual provides strong management oversight of the running of the home. She works closely with the manager to support staff and monitor the quality of care provided. The manager and responsible individual make good use of learning from any serious incidents, of complaints and external monitoring to inform practice. They know and understand young people's progress, as well as the home's strengths and the areas for improvement.

The manager uses a clear and well-informed development plan to improve young people's experiences. The local authority continues to invest in training to develop staff's knowledge and skills. This includes training in using relationship-focused approaches to help young people manage their emotions. The staff have also undertaken training in contextualised safeguarding and supporting young people who use cannabis. Improvements in the quality of young people's records are providing a detailed picture of young people's experiences that helps to measure their progress and outcomes accurately.

However, the manager's reviews of the quality of care do not include young people's views about their experiences and the care they receive. As a result, young people do not have a say in what should happen to improve the way in which they are being supported. Furthermore, the reviews of the quality of care do not provide an in-depth analysis of the impact that the help young people receive is having on their lives.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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

Responsible individual: Ruth France

Registered manager: James De Turberville

Inspector

Nick Veysey, social care inspector

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