

SC040509

Registered provider: Salford City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority children's home. The home is registered to provide care for three children with social and emotional difficulties and/or special educational needs and/or disabilities.

There were three children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

There has been no registered manager since September 2024.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 September 2024

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: 4 July 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/07/2023	Full	Good
31/05/2022	Full	Good
23/02/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
28/01/2020	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have trusting and secure relationships with staff who know them well and prioritise their well-being. The staff treat the children with dignity and respect, and children experience care that is sensitive to their individual needs.

Staff support children to take part in a range of activities to support and encourage their hobbies and interests, such as drama groups, the gym and trampolining. For one child who is new to the home, there are plans for them to join Brownies and swimming lessons. One child has been supported to go on holiday to Poland, and another child was supported on a holiday to Wales.

Staff support children to have time with their families in line with their agreed plans. This helps children to maintain relationships that are important to them.

Children are supported to attend school every day. One child had some challenges with their school transport. The staff worked with the school staff to find a solution and to ensure that this did not impact on the child's learning. One child has recently achieved their functional skills and is now attending college.

Children's health needs are met. Staff ensure that children are registered with a dentist, GP and opticians when they come to live at the home. They are supported to attend routine appointments and are also helped to access specialist health professionals when needed, such as child and adolescent mental health services.

When children are new to the home, their compatibility is suitably assessed. This includes information gathered from key professionals involved in their care. Children are supported to move into the home with the best possible planning under the circumstances and time frames available.

Children who have left the home have left in a positive and planned way, in line with their individual plans. Staff have supported children with moves to their new homes to make the change as comfortable and easy as possible for them. Both children who have left the home have moved into semi-independent living and were supported by the staff team. There are structured plans in place for staff to remain in contact with the children to give them continued support and to maintain important relationships.

There are shortfalls with the home environment. There are plans in place for extensive refurbishment. However, these have not yet taken place. Some of the shortfalls could be quickly fixed to make the home appear more homely and inviting, such as displaying photos of the children and repairing damaged fixtures and fittings.

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

There have been no safeguarding concerns or allegations since the last inspection. Staff are suitably trained in safeguarding. Staff spoken to were able to explain the correct procedure to follow if they have any safeguarding concerns. One child said that if they have any worries or concerns, they can talk to staff, and staff will listen. Children also understand how to raise a complaint if necessary.

Children's individual risks are detailed in their plans. Staff understand these documents and put them into practice. They are frequently reviewed and updated, and they give clear guidance to staff to ensure that support for children is consistent. However, some information was missing from one child's plans. This limits the staff's ability to understand the child's history and to respond suitably should these behaviours occur.

Staff have responded appropriately when children have been missing from the home. They work in partnership with the police to support a quick and safe return to the home. Staff complete follow-up work with children to explore their reasons for going missing and to share the dangers of being missing from the home.

Achievements are praised and celebrated. This makes children feel valued. When it has been necessary to impose consequences as a result of negative behaviours, they are reasonable, proportionate and necessary.

Direct-work sessions take place regularly. They cover relevant topics and current risks, and they are also completed following any significant events. However, they are usually completed reactively, and this is a missed opportunity to use these sessions to help children prepare for any changes or important events.

There are systems in place for the safer recruitment of staff. However, one staff file did not have suitable references. This affects the provider's ability to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There is currently no registered manager. However, there are suitable arrangements in place through the responsible individual, assistant service manager and deputy managers for the day-to-day management of the home. A manager has been recruited and is waiting to start their employment.

Leaders and managers have effective monitoring systems that enable them to identify any areas of strengths or to recognise any areas for development. However, there are some shortfalls in the evaluation of significant events and missing-from-home reports, as the manager's oversight does not always reflect on staff practice and the effectiveness of consequences is not evaluated.

There is an experienced and consistent staff team that has worked at the home for some time. This means that staff know the children well. They are suitably trained in

mandatory subjects and topics that meet the children's individual needs. When a training need has been identified through children's impact assessments, extra training has been sourced, such as training in global developmental delay and sexually harmful behaviours.

Staff have reported a supportive environment. They understand the protocols to follow if they have any worries or issues and said that leaders and managers are readily available for support and guidance. Team meetings are held regularly and are well attended by the team. They are used for information-sharing and as a development opportunity for staff.

Staff have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised annually. Supervision sessions take place frequently and are a supportive tool for staff. However, not all supervision sessions reflect on staff practice specific to the needs of the children and the impact the staff member has on children. This limits their effectiveness.

Managers and staff have effective links with external agencies to provide support to the home and the children, such as social workers, STARLAC, the missing-from-care coordinator and Early Breaks. This ensures that there is a child-centred, wraparound approach to providing the best outcomes for children.

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, The 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 staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; and help each child to understand how to keep safe. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(ii)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff support children to understand how to keep themselves safe and to work proactively with children to help them prepare for difficult situations.	25 October 2024
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (3)(d)) Specifically, the registered provider must have systems in place to ensure that the correct references are obtained.	25 October 2024
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; and	25 October 2024

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— ensure that staff— provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iv)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that all necessary information is included in children's plans to help staff understand the child's background and care needs.	
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; and 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; 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)(vii)(c)(i)(ii)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that the home is decorated and maintained to an acceptable standard and that any damage and/or wear and tear is quickly addressed and rectified.	25 October 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all staff consistently follow the home's policies and procedures for the benefit of the children in the home's care. The registered person should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents to reflect on staff practice. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations', page 54, paragraphs 10.20 and 10.24)
- The registered person should ensure that all imposed consequences are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and effective. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations', page 46, paragraph 9.36)
- The registered person should ensure that there are systems in place so that all staff receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

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: SC040509

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Civic Centre, Chorley Road, Swinton, Manchester M27 5DA

Responsible individual: Emma Simpson

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Katie Tomlinson, Social Care Inspector
Sally Croft, Social Care Inspector

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