

SC040926

Registered provider: Wigan 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. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people aged from 11 to 17 who are unable to live in their family home.

The manager was registered with Ofsted on 24 April 2009.

Children were seen as part of this inspection.

Inspection dates: 17 to 18 September 2019

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 8 January 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/01/2019	Full	Good
04/10/2017	Full	Good
07/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
10/08/2016	Full	Outstanding

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— 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)(c)(i)(ii)) *	21/11/2019
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child overcome any such	21/11/2019

barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; and help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(viii))	
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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and 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)(a)(i)(ii)(v)(vi)(b)) *	21/11/2019
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.	21/11/2019

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(c)(f)(h)) *	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child’s relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(2)(c))	21/11/2019
The registered person must compile in relation to the children’s home a statement (“the statement of purpose”) which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (1)(3)(a)(b))	21/11/2019
Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing— injury to any person (including the child); serious damage to the property of any person (including the	21/11/2019

child); or a child who is accommodated in a secure children's home from absconding from the home. Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2))	
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))	21/11/2019
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))	21/11/2019
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— HMCI. (Regulation 44 (1)(7)(a))	21/11/2019

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

There was one child in placement at the time of the inspection. The registered manager had moved to work in another setting within the organisation. The inspectors identified poor practice relating to care planning, safeguarding and risk assessments. This poor practice does not demonstrate that the children's safety, welfare and progress are prioritised.

During August 2019, staff reported that the home was in 'chaos'. The children who were then in placement were reported to be 'causing disruption in the home and local community'. Police assistance was required on occasions to manage children's behaviours. The provider took the decision to move two children out of the home. The manager reported that at that time incidents had escalated as 'the home had the wrong mix of children and a high number of inexperienced staff'. This fails to demonstrate that planning for children is safe.

The educational attendance and attainment of children are poor. Children do not attend school. There are daily plans for children to attend educational activities. However, staff cannot get children to attend these activities. During the inspection, the child who is currently in placement refused to engage in education and was out in the community with his peers. There were no structures in place to ensure that education is prioritised, and children are not supported to reach their full educational potential.

Staff reported that they do direct work with the children, but this is ineffective. For example, staff complete work with the children on going missing from home and on their behaviour. However, behaviour has not improved, and going missing episodes have increased. This does not demonstrate that direct work sessions with children help and protect them or enable them to make good progress.

One child spends a lot of time away from the home. Inspectors have been informed by the manager, staff and other professionals that he was known to be involved in anti-social behaviour in the community. During the inspection, staff were alerted by another professional who was concerned that the child was involved in an incident of anti-social behaviour. Staff failed to take appropriate action, including when the child was involved in a safeguarding incident and returned home during the early hours of the morning with an injury. This was reported to have been caused by a group of unknown males chasing him.

Inspectors found the home environment is poor. Internal walls and doors are marked and damaged and paintwork requires redecoration. Some windows do not have curtains or blinds to ensure that children have privacy. There is damage throughout the home. For example, the living area had the remains of a television bracket, where the television had been pulled off the wall. A broken fridge had been left in the kitchen. Milk was being stored in the kitchen cupboard, with refrigerated goods stored in a separate annex. Children's bedrooms are in a poor condition. The registered manager has not ensured that all repairs are carried out in a timely manner. As a result, children are not provided with a safe, homely and welcoming environment.

Staff proactively promote positive contact between children and their families. This has helped the child living at the home to maintain a good relationship with his mother.

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

Safeguarding practice in this home is poor and does not promote the welfare and safety

of children. Managers and staff are not fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children. Effective action is not always taken when there is a concern about a child's welfare and as a result children were not protected from harm, especially when out in the community.

Staff and a social worker informed inspectors that they cannot keep the child who is living in the home safe and that they reported they are worried about his welfare. However, effective action was not taken to try and minimise the known risk factors.

Staff are able to identify risk, but they do not act to manage risks effectively. Risk assessments do not accurately reflect or address the current needs of children. Furthermore, insufficient action has been taken to ensure that all risk assessments are reviewed and updated. This means that staff cannot effectively manage risk and keep children safe.

When a serious safeguarding incident was shared with staff by other professionals, the information was recorded in a telephone log and was not shared with the manager, the child's social worker or other safeguarding professionals. Furthermore, no action was taken to safeguard the child and others. This serious safeguarding shortfall demonstrates that staff do not have the necessary knowledge and skills to keep children and others safe from harm.

Staff do not always follow children's missing from care safety plans. Therefore, children are left in potentially unsafe situations when they are away from the home. Furthermore, when children have been missing from home, overnight on occasion, independent return home interviews do not take place to identify the reasons why children were missing or the risks they faced during the time that they were missing. This means that there are missed opportunities for staff to take effective action to reduce the potential risks to children.

Behaviour management at the home is poor. Staff lack effective strategies to manage the challenging behaviour of the children and are unable to de-escalate situations consistently and effectively. As a result, children have caused damage to the home, targeted neighbours and have threatened staff and each other.

Staff use physical restraint to manage children's behaviour. On one occasion, a child was restrained for a significant period. This was for an incident of verbal abuse and was disproportionate. This does not demonstrate effective behaviour management and does not contribute to children feeling safe and secure.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The provider has failed to ensure that the current management arrangements are effective. The registered manager is no longer based in the home and has not maintained a clear oversight of the home. Although a new manager has been appointed, she has not applied to Ofsted. She also does not have oversight of the home. The provider reported that a plan had been developed to ensure that a robust handover took

place between the two managers. This did not take place. As a result, leadership and management in the home are poor and the weaknesses in practice have failed to be identified.

The registered manager has failed to demonstrate that she inspires and leads a culture in the home to promote children's welfare and enable them to fulfil their potential. The registered manager and the manager are not leading and managing the home in a manner that is consistent with the aims outlined in the statement of purpose. This fails to demonstrate that the care being delivered meets the individual needs of the children or promotes their safety and welfare.

The provider has failed to ensure that robust systems are in place for monitoring of the home. The registered manager's oversight of care planning and risk management is poor. The inspectors found that risk assessments are not up to date, and the managers have failed to evaluate all known and current risks.

The provider has not ensured that the staff team members have the experience, qualifications and knowledge to understand the risks that children can face or have the skills to support them. The registered manager has failed to ensure that all staff have attended relevant and up-to-date training. This does not ensure that all staff have the knowledge and skills to be able to support, safeguard and care for children.

The registered manager and the manager do not have a clear understanding of the progress of children. They do not know what is happening with children on a day-to-day basis. For example, they did not know about all serious safeguarding incidents that were highlighted in the inspection.

The registered manager and manager do not provide a supportive environment for staff. Staff informed the inspectors that 'staff morale is extremely low'. Although some staff feel supported, this is not the same for all staff. Furthermore, staff do not receive regular supervision to help them in their roles.

Safer recruitment practice needs to improve. For example, references for staff are not always verified. This means that recruitment procedures do not ensure that the most suitable staff work at the home.

The staff are unclear about the ethos and philosophy of the home as described in the statement of purpose. Furthermore, the home's statement of purpose has not been sent to the regulator as stipulated in regulation.

There have been failings in management oversight and monitoring of the home to identify areas of weakness and to take decisive action to resolve these. Internal monitoring does not take place regularly and, as a result, the quality and standard of care has fallen to an unacceptable level.

Independent monitoring reports are not always sent to Ofsted. Furthermore, the registered manager and manager do not address the actions identified from the

independent monitoring visits. As a result, the required improvements are not made, and actions are often repeated.

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: SC040926

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council, Town Hall,
Library Street, Wigan WN1 1YN

Responsible individual: Adele Ion

Registered manager: Victoria Hanlon

Inspectors

Catherine Fargin: social care inspector

Lisa Mulcahy: social care inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2019