

SC040926

Registered provider: Wigan Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides short breaks for up to five children at any one time. The home also provides outreach support to children and their parents and/or carers in the community.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since April 2009.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 March 2023

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: 15 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/03/2022	Full	Good
17/09/2019	Full	Inadequate
08/01/2019	Full	Good
04/10/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children who spend time at this short-breaks service benefit from care that is delivered by a nurturing staff team. Staff are supported by the leadership team to have a good understanding of the children's individual needs and how best to support them.

Staff provide a variety of positive activities to help build trusted bonds with children, supporting some children to have first-time experiences, for example taking a child to the beach for the first time. This experience was captured by the staff through photos and a personalised recording of the day for the child to keep. Children are supported to enjoy activities such as night camping, foraging and acts of kindness in the community. Staff document these moments well, capturing the memories with photos so that children have a record of their time spent at the home.

Children are regularly consulted. Staff regularly seek the children's views and wishes to inform decisions about the home and to make improvements.

Children benefit from individualised, in-house therapeutic support that is child-centred and trauma informed. The therapy team has supported families to repair relationships and delivered training to schools to prevent children being permanently excluded. This support, together with the sensitive support provided by the staff team, helps children to move forward positively. As a result, some children no longer need to access the service for overnight stays.

There are systems in place to ensure that children's health and well-being are well supported. Staff are suitably trained and follow children's medication regimes. Children's health records are kept up to date, and children are helped to access generic health services as required.

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

Children are supported to understand the risks of substance misuse and the importance of keeping safe through direct work with staff. Safe and appropriate behaviour is promoted through positive role modelling, support, praise and incentives. Staff celebrate children's achievements and commend and reward children when they refrain from taking part in unsafe behaviour.

The manager ensures that the relevant professionals, such as social workers, are informed following any significant incidents. The manager is proactive in requesting the necessary meetings to ensure that all risks can be considered cohesively. She requests additional resources and services to meet children's emerging needs quickly and appropriately. Systems are in place to ensure information is shared with the relevant professionals in a timely manner. However, Ofsted was not informed of one

serious incident until some months after the incident. This limits the regulator's oversight of practice in the home.

Incidents of children going missing from this home are rare. However, when incidents have occurred, staff have followed the home's procedures. Children have been supported to return to the home safe and well and have engaged in independent return home interviews.

Regular fire drills are undertaken in the home, and procedures are shared with visitors and children. However, not all children enjoying overnight stays are involved in fire drills.

Procedures for recruiting and appointing staff are thorough. Staff are carefully selected and vetted to ensure that only those who are safe and suitable to work with children do so.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers are passionate about developing the service for children. The manager and two committed deputies are attuned to the needs of the children. Together, they provide consistent support and are a strong management team.

The manager and leadership team provide staff with a clear sense of purpose and direction. They have created a culture of positivity, which the staff team fully embraces. Staff have a positive work ethic and share and implement the home's ethos, approach and philosophy in making a difference to children's lives.

Overall, recording in the home is good. Records are well maintained and written to children. However, records are not always clear, and opportunities to triangulate records following incidents have been missed.

The training needs of staff are clearly identified and met. Staff have access to a range of training opportunities to further develop their skills and knowledge. However, staff have not yet completed training in attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, despite children accessing the service with this diagnosis.

Staff receive regular, practice-related supervision, which provides them with a good opportunity for self-reflection, and personal and professional development. All staff have received their yearly appraisal. Appraisals contain clear targets for professional development but do not always include feedback from children and stakeholders.

The manager has a good understanding of the service through her own detailed monitoring as well as feedback from the independent monthly visits to the home. When shortfalls are identified, swift action is taken to address them.

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— In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications, and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1) (2)(c)) Specifically, the manager must ensure that staff have completed attention deficit hyperactivity disorder training.	16 May 2023
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. (Regulation (25) (1)(d)). Specifically, the manager must ensure children are involved in fire drills.	16 May 2023
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)) Specifically, the manager must ensure that notifications are shared within regulatory timescales.	16 May 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. This appraisal should take into account, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and children in the home's care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards' page 61, paragraph 13.5)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards' page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: SC040926

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Wigan Council

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

Responsible individual: Steven Swinhoe

Registered manager: Victoria Hanlon

Inspector

Kelly McCurdy, Social Care Inspector

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