

SC040926

Registered provider: Wigan Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a local authority. It provides care for up to five children on a short break or emergency care arrangement. Outreach support is also provided to children and their parents/carers in the community.

There were no children staying in the home at the time of the inspection. One child who had previously stayed in the home spoke to the inspector about their experiences there.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 24 April 2009.

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 February 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 21 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/03/2023	Full	Good
15/03/2022	Full	Good
17/09/2019	Full	Inadequate
08/01/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children are at the centre of practice in the home. They benefit from high-quality, nurturing care that is child-centred and tailored to meet their individual needs. Consequently, children are helped to make progress in all areas of their lives.

When children arrive at the home, staff are extremely skilled at reassuring them and building trust. This helps children to feel cared for and able to trust professionals.

Staff persistently seek out new ways to communicate more effectively with children. They adapt existing strategies and explore new methods to help children talk about things that are important to them. Staff proactively promote advocacy services and have implemented digital technology to enable children to self-refer to the advocacy service. This ensures that children receive independent support to understand what is happening in relation to their care and to have their wishes and views heard.

Children have access to a range of new and meaningful activities. They are encouraged to explore nature through bushcraft activities, as well as other physical and creative opportunities. This helps children to develop important independent skills and to become more confident.

Communication is a key strength in the home. Families and professionals are kept updated about the progress children make. One family member said, 'The staff are extremely helpful and kind. I could not suggest anything at all to improve things as it was so good.'

Staff consistently use language that is child-centred and trauma informed. Children's records are exceptionally well maintained and are written in ways that are helpful for children. Staff carefully create records for children of their stays in the home that include pictures of memorable times. This enables children to look back on memories and helps them to recognise and celebrate their achievements and progress.

Staff skilfully deliver direct work with children in line with their plans. Management oversight is consistent and any barriers to children's progress are immediately addressed. Consequently, children develop ambitions and aspirations for the future.

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

Practice in the home is underpinned by a strong safeguarding culture. Managers robustly assess and manage risks for children before and during their stays. This ensures that children's needs can be safely met alongside those of other children staying in the home.

Daily multi-agency risk meetings are held to ensure that information is shared effectively among professionals. Professionals with specific safeguarding expertise provide consultation to the team to ensure that children's risks and vulnerabilities are exceptionally well understood. This strong collaborative approach helps to reduce risks for children.

Staff are passionate about developing their practice. They undertake regular training and are supported by an in-house clinical team to understand children's individual needs. Children's plans are detailed and include individualised strategies of support that are tailored to each child. Staff consistently apply research-based practice to improve their care of the children. They remain vigilant to risks and are proactive in preventing incidents from occurring.

Staff's understanding and application of the trauma-informed model used in the home are excellent. Staff know how to respond to children and support them effectively during times of crisis. Children are helped to recognise, understand and positively manage their emotions. One child said they felt comfortable and safe when in the home.

Children rarely go missing from the home. When incidents do occur, staff respond rapidly to ensure that children are safeguarded. Managers review the actions taken by staff and apply any learning to further develop practice in the home.

Staff have extensive skills in holding important conversations with children. Although children may only stay at the home for a short period of time, topics such as the risks of using vapes, substance misuse and consent in relationships are discussed. Consequently, children are empowered with the knowledge they need to make safer choices.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is meticulous and dynamic in her management of the service. She is well respected by children, their families, other professionals and staff.

Managers are committed to continually improving the service. They use feedback from children, families and external professionals to make positive changes. As a result, the service is highly successful in supporting children to return home or move on to a long term placement.

Managers have high aspirations for children and have developed a culture where staff excel in their roles. Staff are empowered to take the lead on specific areas of improvement. Innovation is encouraged and creativity is valued. This means staff are highly motivated and involved in finding new ways to support the children in their care.

Managers have implemented highly effective monitoring systems to provide them with excellent oversight of practice. Managers seek to understand the child's journey into, and on from, their stay in the home. This helps to identify opportunities to improve the experiences of children beyond the care they receive in the home.

The quality of supervisions and appraisals that managers carry out is exceptional. Staff are provided with an effective space to reflect on their practice and a valuable source of support. Opportunities for development are identified, with goals clearly defined. Staff also access therapeutic consultations from the clinical team. As a result, staff feel supported and committed in fulfilling their roles.

No requirements or recommendations were made at this inspection.

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

Sarah Gilbert, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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