

SC062573

Registered provider: Wakefield Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a local authority. It is registered to provide care for up to four children who may have social and/or emotional difficulties. There were two children living there at the time of the inspection.

The home has not had a registered manager since 18 November 2022, but an acting manager is temporarily overseeing the care of the two children. The local authority has plans for the home to close following the registration of their new homes.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 January 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: 1 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/03/2022	Full	Good
09/07/2019	Full	Good
09/05/2018	Full	Good
22/08/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive individualised, nurturing care from staff who know them well. This helps children to make progress in all areas of their lives. Staff take care to ensure that valued relationships are sustained when children move on.

Diversity is respected and children are supported by staff to express their identity and individuality in line with their wishes. The children's views are listened to. They are involved in writing their own plans. This helps children to think about what help they might need to achieve their goals.

Children are supported to spend time with people who are important to them. Parents and carers are positive about the progress that children make. One parent said that their child has come along in 'leaps and bounds'.

Children's moves in to and on from the home are carefully managed to make them as positive as possible. Child-friendly plans help children to understand any future changes. The staff work hard to help children to feel at home. Children choose items for their rooms and their pets are welcomed. One child moved in to the home with their pets, and this has helped them to settle in.

Education is valued. Where there are obstacles, the manager and staff work with services to overcome them. Both children now have bespoke learning plans, which enable them to access resources that meet their needs. When not accessing formal education, children are provided with learning opportunities both within and outside of the home.

Children's physical health needs are met. Staff have been trained in providing therapeutic care and link closely with specialist teams. This helps children's emotional health to improve.

The staff have taken care to make the environment as homely as possible. The paint on the communal areas has been refreshed. The children's rooms are decorated to their taste. Staff ensure that the whole building is clean and well maintained.

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

The shortfalls identified in the previous inspection have been addressed, although it is too early to evaluate some of the changes. The format of risk assessments has been improved and they are now written using child-friendly language. Staff know what steps they are to take to help to keep children safe, and these plans are followed.

When children are missing from home, staff take steps to locate them. Children are consistently offered the opportunity to talk to an independent person when they return home. Children's missing protocols are now updated and reviewed monthly.

The staff are all trained in restraint techniques. However, they use their skills to de-escalate situations so that children do not need to be held. One of the children living at the home is subject to restrictions due to their presenting risks. The staff work alongside the clinical team to keep the child safe with minimal intervention.

Since the last inspection, there has been a focus on providing children with consistent boundaries. Staff ensure that children understand how to use social media and the internet safely. A 'good parent' approach is used to impose age-appropriate restrictions.

Children are supported to build friendships and to be kind to each other. Incidents are infrequent. When they do occur, work is done with children to encourage positive behaviours. Sanctions are rarely used and when they are, their effectiveness is evaluated.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There have been changes within the management team since the last inspection. The registered manager has left following a period of absence over the summer. The operational manager is managing the home temporarily. The local authority has plans to register a further two homes for the children to move in to in the next few months. They want the best for the children, and this commitment is reflected across the staff team. There is a renewed focus on ensuring that staff practice consistently reflects the ethos of the statement of purpose.

There has been a wholesale review of systems. Effective monitoring tools enable the management team to evaluate progress, not just of the children, but also in the quality of staff practice.

The staff are positive about the changes and say that they are well supported. Supervision takes place regularly and includes discussion about each of the children. When incidents do occur, staff are supported to reflect on their practice and identify areas where it might be improved. Children's plans are updated accordingly.

Safe recruitment practice is followed. New staff undertake an induction. An improved monitoring system ensures that staff complete training within timescales. The acting manager has increased the frequency of staff appraisals, enabling practice to be formally reviewed throughout the year.

Staff are trained to meet the individual and changing needs of each of the children. Staff are provided with additional opportunities for learning and practice development in regular team meetings.

The acting manager has taken steps to strengthen relationships with outside agencies. Close liaison with the clinical team ensures that children receive therapeutic care.

The management team advocates on behalf of children. This has included challenging other services to ensure that children's needs are met.

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: SC062573

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Wakefield Council, County Hall, Bond Street,
Wakefield WF1 2QW

Responsible individual: Cheryl Whitehouse

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Laura Grundy, Social Care Inspector

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