

SC064663

Registered provider: Eastfield Group

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private organisation. It provides care for up to seven children who may experience social or emotional difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since May 2023.

At the time of the inspection, there were six children living in the home. Five children spoke to the inspector about their experiences living in the home.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 March 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
---	--

How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
---	---------------------------------

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
---	---------------------------------

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 2 and 3 August 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/08/2022	Full	Good
15/03/2022	Full	Good
26/10/2021	Full	Inadequate
09/04/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

The progress and experiences of children living in the home are varied. Most children like living in the home. They are helped to develop positive relationships with staff. Children make progress when living in the home, but shortfalls in management oversight of practice mean that children's experiences are not always positive.

Since the last inspection, seven children have left the home and six have moved in. One child has lived in the home for four years and is happy and settled. Children do not always move out of the home in a planned way. This does not help children to have positive experiences of moving on from the home, and this is also disruptive for other children living in the home.

Records do not reflect how children's needs are considered before they move into the home. This is a missed opportunity to demonstrate the decision-making around children moving into the home. This was a requirement at the last inspection and has been restated.

Children are encouraged to attend medical appointments. However, opportunities to help children understand the health risks of vaping are missed. Children's use of e-cigarettes has not been assessed in relation to risk or regularly followed up with support from smoking cessation services or direct-work sessions to reduce the likelihood of harm.

Children are making progress in their education. One child said the staff helped them find a school they like, which means they now attend when they previously did not.

Not all children are helped to understand how their past experiences may impact on their behaviours, and their emotional well-being is not well supported. Direct-work sessions do not enable children to reflect on and understand their history or to keep appropriate memorabilia of the time spent living in the home.

Children live in a large home. Their bedrooms are spacious and adequately furnished. Communal areas are homely, and one room has photos of the children and staff enjoying shared activities. However, staff say that they often prefer to sleep in the communal lounge at night rather than in the sleep-in room. This impinges on children's living arrangements and reduces their access to communal rooms in the home.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Children have individual risk and behaviour management plans. However, children's risk plans do not accurately reflect their current risks, and they lack clarity for staff to follow to keep children safe. This limits opportunities to ensure that all staff are aware of children's individual risks and vulnerabilities and that practice in the home is consistent. This was a requirement at the last inspection and has been restated.

Rules and boundaries are in place; however, they are not always communicated clearly with children. One child said that consequences keep changing, leading them to feel frustrated. This does not help children to feel listened to.

There is a blanket approach to switching off electricity to sockets in children's bedrooms at night. The rationale provided by managers and staff is inconsistent and includes fire safety and potential behaviours by children at night. This restrictive practice does not consider children's emotional well-being and is not reflective of trauma-informed, nurturing, child-centred care. It is also a missed opportunity to support children to develop their understanding of fire risks and enable them to make safer choices in preparation for becoming more independent.

Staff have completed mandatory training, including safeguarding and physical intervention. However, staff have not completed training related to caring for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, despite this being relevant to children in their care. This does not ensure that staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills to care for children's specific needs effectively.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The manager is child-centred and is committed to improving outcomes for children. She is supported by the responsible individual and a deputy manager. The manager is fully involved in the children's lives and spends significant periods of time in the home. However, her level of input into the day-to-day care of the children impacts on her abilities to effectively manage her leadership and management responsibilities.

The manager is a strong advocate for the children and will challenge other professionals. On occasion, her passion to improve things for children has resulted in negative communication with other professionals. This has contributed to difficulties in making shared decisions in the best interests of a child.

Staff feel valued and supported by managers. One staff member described the manager as 'supportive, approachable and child-focused'. Staff receive regular supervision and attend team meetings. However, research and development to inform how to improve practice are rarely discussed.

Internal and external monitoring systems are not robust. Reports from the independent person contain repeated information, and the manager's quality of care report lacks evaluation and does not include the views of children, parents and external stakeholders. This limits management oversight and does not support the development and improvement of practice. A requirement made at the last inspection has been restated.

Leaders and managers have not taken sufficient action to meet three requirements and one recommendation made at the last inspection. Shortfalls in the home's workforce development plan raised at the last inspection had not been addressed until raised by the inspector during this inspection. Three requirements have been restated, and the recommendation has been incorporated into an additional requirement.

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 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)(b)) This specifically relates to children's safety plans and the need for all risks to be identified with clear strategies in place for keeping children safe when a risk arises. In addition, ensure that children are supported to access smoking cessation services and that staff know how to respond to children who use e-cigarettes. This requirement was made at the last inspection and has been restated.	31 May 2024
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—	31 May 2024

that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that they only accept placements for children when they are satisfied that they can meet the child's needs and that the impact on other children in the home has been assessed. This requirement was made at the last inspection and has been restated.	
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. 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; 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and development in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1) (2) (c)(f)(g)(i)(h)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that monitoring and review systems are used to improve the quality of care provided in the home and that the home's workforce development plan contains the necessary staffing structure and the details for managing poor performance. In	31 May 2024

addition, ensure that research and development are used to further develop and support staff and that training specific to the needs of the children in their care is completed.	
No measure of control or discipline which is excessive, unreasonable or contrary to paragraph (2) may be used in relation to any child. The following measures may not be used to discipline any child— any measure involving punishing a group of children for the behaviour of an individual child. (Regulation 19 (1) (2)(j)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that electricity in children’s bedrooms is not restricted, that any consequences in the home are restorative in nature and used consistently and that their effectiveness is kept under review.	31 May 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 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— understand and apply the home’s statement of purpose; protect and promote each child’s welfare; treat each child with dignity and respect; provide personalised care that meets each child’s needs, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans, taking account of the child’s background; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect;	31 May 2024

help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult; provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; provide to children personal items that are appropriate for their age and understanding; and make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice; 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)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(ix) (c)(i)(ii)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that practice in the home considers the children's emotional well-being, helps children to develop their understanding of safe routines and enables them to make safer choices in preparation for becoming more independent.	
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5 (d))	31 May 2024
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children;	31 May 2024

the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and

any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c))

This requirement was made at the last inspection and has been restated.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the design of the home provides staff that sleep overnight in the home with appropriate accommodation and facilities to do so without impinging on children's living arrangements. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations', including the quality standards, page 17, paragraph 3.26)
- The registered manager should ensure that staff help children to understand their history and encourage children to keep appropriate memorabilia of their time living at the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations', including the quality standards, page 16, paragraph 3.14)

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: SC064663

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Eastfield Group

Registered provider address: 6d Reyground House, 6b Ryeground Lane, Formby, Merseyside L37 7EQ

Responsible individual: Ivy Thompson

Registered manager: Claire Turner

Inspector

Zillah Brooks, 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 children looked after, 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 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: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024