

SC066916

Registered provider:

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home. It is registered to provide care for up to four children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 15 to 16 March 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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: 25 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/02/2020	Full	Outstanding
16/01/2019	Full	Outstanding
18/12/2017	Full	Outstanding
24/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

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

Children are currently struggling with attending education on time and with risk-taking behaviours such as going missing from home for long periods and drug misuse. They smoke in their bedrooms. Staff encourage them not to smoke or misuse drugs but children continue regardless.

The home is currently being redecorated. However, some areas look old and tired, such as kitchen units and furniture in a lounge.

There are hazards in the home:

- Fire exits are not clearly signed as per the home's fire risk assessment.
- The gate to the ginnel (a route to escape a house fire) was very difficult to open, hindering escape from a fire. This was resolved during the inspection.
- The ginnel is unlit, the paving is uneven and there is a lot of litter. Furthermore, the entrances to the ginnel are locked and staff do not possess keys. No thought has been given to this as an escape route.
- The backyard is an uninviting place. The concrete is uneven and unsightly. There is part of a bed frame with rusty springs stored in the yard, along with other broken items waiting to be disposed of. There are cigarette butts in the yard that have been thrown out of children's bedrooms. The registered manager said that the children do not use this space.
- The kitchen is not kept clean. For example, the oven, cooker hood and microwave were dirty from grease and food debris. These areas were cleaned during the inspection.

The registered manager said that delays to redecorating and the removal of rubbish from the yard have been caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there has been a lack of attention to the safety of children from hazards in the home.

Children do have regular discussions with staff about the running of the home and their care. However, these are not currently captured well. There are no regular house meetings and children's views about imposed sanctions are not recorded.

All children have a school placement, but they are all currently struggling to attend on time or go at all. Staff work closely with school staff to support children with their education. A headteacher said, 'Staff work effectively and collaboratively to ensure that education is at the forefront of each young person's thoughts.'

Children are rarely in the home out of school hours. They go out to be with their friends. Therefore, children do not attend clubs and do very few activities in the local and wider community with staff. Staff have tried to encourage children to join

clubs and have bought them the necessary equipment, such as basketball boots, to no avail. This limits the staff's ability to form strong and nurturing relationships with children. However, staff do have positive relationships with children and children said that they like the staff.

Medication is not kept securely and, therefore, children could have unsupervised access to it. During the inspection, medication left on top of a cupboard in the office was immediately put into a secure cupboard. This medication belongs to a child who no longer lives in the home and therefore it should not be in the home.

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

A child who regularly went missing from care prior to coming to this home has significantly reduced how often she goes missing. This is due to close working with social care and listening to the child.

Another child continues to go missing and is suspected of being involved in criminal exploitation. There are regular multi-agency meetings to review his safety plan. But despite this he continues to go missing, but he does continue to return to the home. Staff follow appropriate procedures when children go missing from care.

The missing-from-care records are misleading and do not give information about the time a child was last seen, or times when staff called the child, their friends and so on. These details would improve the quality of recording. However, the records do demonstrate that staff search for the child and try to contact them and known friends.

Staff have received training in restraint and de-escalation techniques. Restraint is rarely used because staff use de-escalation techniques effectively. Staff also encourage children to make the positive choices.

Sanctions are used in the form of reparation. For example, if children use a taxi to get home or damage something in the home, they are asked to pay back the incurred cost from their pocket money. However, this is not recorded as a sanction and, therefore, it is difficult to monitor patterns and trends, review the effectiveness of the sanction or give children an opportunity to comment on the fairness of the sanction.

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

The registered manager is experienced and qualified. She has run an outstanding home for a number of years. She says that the pandemic has been a difficult time for her and her team.

The home has changed its method of storing records to electronic files. The current system is flawed because the registered manager struggled to find important

documents, such as records pertaining to a complaint made by neighbours, staff meeting minutes and a training matrix. The registered manager was not aware of some records, such as incident records, that had been filed electronically and, therefore, she had not commented on them.

There is an established and experienced team of staff. Most staff are qualified. They said that they feel very well supported by the registered manager and the team. Staff complete some face-to-face training, but most is online. The registered manager checks their learning by asking staff to evaluate their learning and state what impact it has on children. This is effective. However, staff have not received training around attachment and trauma for children. This would help staff have a better understanding of therapeutic approaches and the needs of traumatised children.

Staff know the children well and want the best for them. External professionals and parents are very happy with the help and support the children receive. External professionals agreed that staff are professional and keep them updated.

Staff work a 24-hour shift. They can choose to sleep or rest at appropriate times. Staff like this way of working because it means they get a few days off after their shift. However, they do not have a proper place to sleep. This may affect the quality of sleep they get and therefore their response to children. For example, staff sleep in a lounge that the responsible individual says is a staffroom that children can also go in if they wish. The room does not have a bed in it and does not provide staff with privacy.

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 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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(d)) This relates to hazards in the yard, an outdoor bin that is brought through the house, including through the kitchen, fire signage not in accordance with the home's fire risk assessment, a blocked fire exit from the yard into the ginnel, and being unable to exit the ginnel because staff do not have a key.	30 April 2022
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (3)) This relates to records of complaints that could not be found.	30 April 2022
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration;	30 April 2022

details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)(iv)) This relates to ensuring that records of all reparations and any other sanctions imposed on children are properly recorded and that the child has the opportunity to comment on the sanction imposed.	
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular the registered person must ensure that— medicines kept in the home are stored in a secure place so as to prevent any child from having unsupervised access to them. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(a)) This relates to ensuring that all medication is securely stored.	30 April 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should support staff to gain skills and experience that enable them to actively support each child to achieve their potential. This specifically refers to ensuring that staff complete training in attachment and trauma to give them a better understanding of therapeutic parenting. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.5)
- The registered person should ensure that the design of the home should provide staff that sleep in the home overnight with appropriate accommodation and facilities to do so. This refers to the lack of a private space with appropriate facilities, such as a bed, for staff who are sleeping in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.26)

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: SC066916

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Fullwood Care

Registered provider address: 103 Ampthill Rd, Liverpool L17 9QN

Responsible individual: John Joel

Registered manager: Elaine Cooke

Inspector

Joanne Vyas, Social Care Inspector

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