

SC432843

Registered provider: Talbot House Children's Charity Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a charity and may care for up to five children who have emotional and social difficulties and learning disabilities.

Three children were living in the home at the time of inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2023.

Inspection date: 8 November 2023

Date of last inspection: 16 May 2023

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Outcome from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

Children are developing positive relationships with staff. Children are given time to build those relationships at their own pace. This supports them to develop trust over time with the adults who care for them.

Not all children who live in the home are attending education. One child has not attended school for several months. Staff have improved how they engage children who do not attend school, and they do this by engaging them in alternative learning. However, planning for one child's return to school remains unclear.

Staff continue to restrict children's movement around the home. Doors to the kitchen and connecting areas are locked at night, and the reasoning for this was inconsistent across the management and staff team. This means children are being restricted from accessing all areas of their home and from having access to food in the evenings. This was raised at the last inspection.

The home uses alarms to alert staff when children leave their bedrooms at night. The manager assesses and reviews the need for these alarms and the rationale is recorded in children's plans. Therefore, only children who need this measure in place are subject to this monitoring in their home.

Children's risk assessments provide information about their risks and vulnerabilities. This is to ensure that children receive well-planned responses from the adults who care for them. However, one child is frequently held by staff, and there is nothing written in their plan about how staff are to manage this safely. This means that staff do not have clear information about what holds are effective for individual children. Managers complete an assessment when considering a new child moving into the home. This helps the manager to set out how staff will balance the competing needs of all the children living in the home. Children living in the home are therefore thoughtfully considered when welcoming a new child to the home.

Leaders and managers have not provided some staff with the training required to safely meet the needs of children. This includes essential training, such as first aid and behaviour support. This limits the staff's ability to deliver care as set out in the home's statement of purpose.

On one occasion, a concern was raised about practice within the home, which was referred to the local authority designated officer. The manager effectively addressed this. However, they did not notify Ofsted of this safeguarding concern. This prevents Ofsted from scrutinising how significant events and potential safeguarding concerns are investigated.

Supervision for managers and staff has improved. Staff are receiving regular supervision, and records show that there is a focus on children, safeguarding and reflective practice. Staff said they feel well supported by managers.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/05/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
14/06/2022	Full	Good
18/05/2021	Full	Good
21/10/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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 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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; and ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(c))	22 December 2023
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(viii))	22 December 2023
No measure of control or discipline which is excessive, unreasonable or contrary to paragraph (2) may be used in relation to any child.	22 December 2023

The following measures may not be used to discipline any child— any punishment involving the consumption or deprivation of food or drink; or any measure involving punishing a group of children for the behaviour of an individual child. (Regulation 19 (1) (2)(b)(j)) In particular, the kitchen door should not be locked at night.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there (Regulation 40 (4)(c))	22 December 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person must ensure that in a restraint situation, staff should use their professional judgement, supported by their knowledge of each child's risk assessment, an understanding of the needs of the child (as set out in their relevant plans) and an understanding of the risks the child faces. Professional judgements may need to be taken quickly, and staff training and supervision of practice should support this. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 48, paragraph 9.53)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC432843

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Talbot House Children's Charity Limited

Responsible individual: Deirdre Pearson

Registered manager: Joanne Reiling

Inspector

Joanne Wallis, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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