

1242116

Registered provider: Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides care and accommodation for up to four children and young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection date: 23 February 2018

Judgement at last inspection: Good

Date of last inspection: 15 June 2017

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.

The registered manager left the children's home in December 2017 and the local authority is currently recruiting a new permanent manager. In the meantime, the local authority has appointed a temporary manager with suitable experience and qualifications. The new manager is also in charge of the local authority's short-breaks service for young people on the edge of care. An experienced and qualified senior member of the staff is permanently based at the home and supports the manager effectively in the day-to-day running and development of the home.

A well-established and experienced staff team continues to provide young people with a good quality of care and this helps bring stability to their lives. Young people form positive attachments and relationships with the people caring for them each day. A young person said that it is good living here because 'Staff treat you well.' Staff actively build a friendly atmosphere where young people feel safe and where they are encouraged and supported to make the right choices.

Staff have high aspirations for every young person. They work hard to make sure that young people have the right opportunities to reach their potential and have improved outcomes. The staff have successfully supported a young person to secure a permanent job. They helped him write job applications, built his confidence and skills, and coached him in preparation for interviews. The young person showed resilience and determination to keep going to interviews until he was successful. Staff's excellent partnership with the local authority's employment service helped the young person find the right job for him. Staff are also helping him to prepare for adult life. They are working closely with his personal adviser to help him find his own accommodation in an area where he wants to live and with the best possible support. The staff have also supported another young person effectively to move on to new accommodation in a planned way at the right time.

The staff have strong working relationships with social workers, schools and the virtual school. They are working hard together to tackle the barriers to young people taking part in education. The staff have an understanding of the factors that are currently making it difficult for young people to go to school and are proactive in coming up with possible solutions. This has included changing young people's school timetables in order to better meet their particular needs, such as starting school later and offering young people time on vocational courses. Staff also help young people see the benefits of education and build young people's confidence in their own abilities.

The staff have a clear understanding of the risks to young people's safety. They work effectively with social workers, the police, and safeguarding teams to manage and reduce risk. Managers meet regularly with the police and other partners to share information about risks in the local area relating to gangs and criminal exploitation. Staff take appropriate action when they have concerns about young people's safety, including taking and picking up young people when they go to see their families. Staff balance protecting young people effectively with enabling them to take appropriate and reasonable risks to promote their personal growth. The staff are helping young people to understand and learn skills to manage risk and to keep themselves and others safe. Young people are no longer going missing from home or spending a lot of time independently in the community. However, young people's continued use of cannabis brings them into contact with people involved in crime and places them at risk of harm. When young people are away from home, staff take suitable action to monitor their welfare.

At times, staff have struggled to manage some young people's aggressive and threatening behaviour, which has resulted in staff calling the police for help.

Young people's poor behaviour is not always dealt with consistently. Staff are not using coherent and effective behaviour-management plans to support young people to manage their feelings, control unacceptable behaviour, and make appropriate choices. Staff are not using sanctions (known as 'consequences') consistently to address poor behaviour. Individual members of staff have used measures that are not part of the young person's support plan. Staff are not using restorative measures that help young people recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other young people, the staff caring for them and the wider community. The written sanctions records are not

routinely reviewed by a manager or senior member of staff who had not been directly involved in the decision to use the measure. The records do not always show a reflective and evaluative account of each incident and young people’s views about what happened. This is a missed opportunity for the manager to understand what happened, understand the behaviour, identify patterns and emerging themes, build on good practice, and work out how best to support young people in the future. Likewise, young people’s individual risk assessments and management plans are not always kept up to date.

The head of service, manager and staff recognise that they need to work together in a more consistent and coordinated way to promote positive behaviour and help young people have better outcomes. The manager and staff are working to improve things. They are starting to use team meetings and group and individual supervision to better understand young people’s aggressive behaviour. This allows the manager and staff to reflect about how they have responded, and to develop ways of working with young people that encourage and reinforce positive behaviour and relationships. In addition, a team development day is planned to develop staff expertise in managing risk, building resilience, and understanding attachment and trauma.

The external monitoring by an independent person now provides a more detailed evaluation of the home’s effectiveness at meeting young people’s needs. However, the most recent internal review of the quality of care provided did not reflect critically on the standard of support young people receive and the impact it is making on their lives. In addition, the review of the quality of care did not show young people’s views about the support that they get and how they feel about living at the home. This insight into how young people experience the care that they receive is crucial in helping leaders and managers understand the quality and impact of what they are doing. The lack of it also limits their ability to identify and make further improvements.

Since the last inspection, no new members of staff have been recruited to work at the home. This means that the progress made in keeping detailed records about recruitment checks could not be assessed. This will be reviewed at the next inspection.

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 15/06/2017 | Full | Good |

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 |
|--|------------|
| <p>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.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate. (Regulation 13(1)(2)(b))</p> <p>This is about the registered person making sure that staff work consistently as a team to promote positive behaviour. Expectations of standards of behaviour for children should be clear and unambiguous.</p> | 31/03/2018 |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that (a) 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 effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and 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) (vii), (b) (i) (ii) and (c))</p> <p>This relates to records of sanctions ('consequences') and serious incidents, and the registered person making sure that children's comments are recorded and that each incident or sanction is reviewed and evaluated by the registered manager or an authorised person who had not been directly involved in the decision to use the measure.</p> | 31/03/2018 |

Recommendations

- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11) In particular, the review of the quality of the care provided should show what children say about their experiences and the action taken in response.
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any

assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

- The registered person should ensure that recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1) In particular, keep a written record of the outcome of enquiries made to verify written references and, when a person wishing to work at the home has a criminal conviction, the assessment of that person's suitability.
- The registered person should undertake a review (in line with regulation 45) that focuses on the quality of the care provided by the home, the experiences of children living there and the impact the care is having on outcomes and improvements for the children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.2)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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: 1242116

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Knowsley MBC, Children's Services, Huyton Municipal Buildings, 6th Floor, Huyton, Merseyside L36 9YU

Responsible individual: Ruth France

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Nick Veysey, 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 looked after children, 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 <http://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: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2018