

1244946

Registered provider: Wigan Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority, two-bedded home. The aim of the home is to provide care and accommodation while young people are assessed and future permanency is explored.

The registered manager resigned from this position on 17 April 2018 and interim arrangements were put in place. However, no submission to register has been made to Ofsted and so, legally, this is currently a vacant post.

Inspection dates: 29 to 30 May 2018

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 Inadequate

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: 5 February 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/02/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
31/07/2017	Interim	Not judged

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 registered person must maintain records ('case records') for each child which—</p> <p>Include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child;</p> <p>are kept up to date; and</p> <p>are signed and dated by the author of each entry.</p> <p>Regulation 36(1)(a)-(c), Schedule 3</p>	31/07/2018
<p>The health and well-being standard is that—</p> <p>the health and well-being needs of children are met;</p> <p>children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and</p> <p>children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>That staff help each child to—</p> <p>achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans; and</p> <p>take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child's health and well-being needs.</p> <p>Regulation 10(1)(a)-(c) and (2)(a)(i) and (iii)</p>	31/07/2018
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation;</p> <p>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious;</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;</p>	31/7/2018

<p>a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or</p> <p>concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.</p> <p>(Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))</p>	
<p>27: Appointment of manager</p> <p>The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children’s home if—</p> <p>there is no registered manager in respect of the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 27(1)(a))</p>	30/06/2018
<p>The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children’s home at least once each month.</p> <p>When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—</p> <p>if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and</p> <p>to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home’s records (except for a child’s case records, unless the child and the child’s placing authority consent) as the independent person requires.</p> <p>A visit by the independent person to the home may be unannounced.</p> <p>The independent person must produce a report about a visit (“the independent person’s report”) which sets out, in particular, the independent person’s opinion as to whether—</p> <p>children are effectively safeguarded; and</p> <p>the conduct of the home promotes children’s well-being.</p> <p>The independent person’s report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions.</p> <p>The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person’s report to—</p> <p>HMCI. (Regulation 44 (1)(2)(a)(b)(3)(4)(a)(b)(5)and (7))</p>	30/06/2018
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p>	30/06/2018

<p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>help each child to understand how to keep safe; and</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare;</p> <p>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; and</p> <p>that the effectiveness of the home’s child protection policies is monitored regularly.</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure there is an effective system in place for ensuring timely and meaningful independent return interviews. (Regulation 12(1))a)(i)(ii)(vi)(b)and(c))</p>	
<p>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.</p> <p>In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p> <p>the quality of care provided for children;</p> <p>the feedback and opinions of children about the children’s home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and</p> <p>any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.</p> <p>After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review (“the quality of care review report”).</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and</p> <p>make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the</p>	<p>30/09/2018</p>

<p>parent of a child accommodated in the home.</p> <p>The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.</p> <p>(Regulation 45 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c)(3)(4)(a)(b)(5))</p>	
<p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to achieve the child’s education and training targets, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans;</p> <p>support each child’s learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study;</p> <p>promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; and</p> <p>that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child’s learning.</p> <p>(Regulation 8 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(v)(vi)(b))</p>	30/06/2018
<p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—</p> <p>meet the needs of each child.</p> <p>Specifically, the home must ensure that the location of the toileting facilities does not compromise children’s privacy and dignity. (Regulation 6(1)(a)(2)(vii)(ix)(c)(i))</p>	31/08/2018

Recommendations

- Demonstrate that all staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about a child must always be recorded in a way that is helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Inspection judgements

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

There have been no new admissions or discharges since the last inspection. The two young people remain relatively happy and safe and enjoy good relationships with the staff. They also enjoy regular, positive contact with their family and friends. This promotes young people's unique identities.

Young people know that this is not their long-term home, which limits their investment in the placement. Following delays, clearer plans are now in place to move the young people on to their preferred long-term placements in the near future. One young person has written his own profile to ensure that he has the best possible fostering match. One young person said, 'I am happy to be moving into semi-independence soon.' However, one care plan from the placing authority is significantly out of date, and the other contains inaccurate information. This means that staff cannot demonstrate that they are meeting the young people's current assessed needs.

Young people have been out of full-time education for a significant period of time. Following a full assessment of one young person's educational needs, he started a week ago at a new specialist school. This means that attendance and progress cannot as yet be determined. Furthermore, due to non-attendance and lack of engagement, one young person was not entered for any nationally recognised examinations, which negatively impacts on their future job opportunities. It is acknowledged that further education opportunities have since been put in place for September for this young person.

One young person was spending too much time in the home playing computer games. In response, the staff have recently successfully linked him with an outreach worker. This had had the desired effect of encouraging more engagement in constructive activities outside the home in order to improve his social skills and to take part in more regular exercise.

Following a recommendation in a statutory medical, staff are now actively encouraging a young person to have a healthier lifestyle. However, staff have not monitored his diet, exercise and weight, so are unable to demonstrate if any progress is being made. Furthermore, records lack sufficient detail. For example, all that staff had recorded was

'Did some exercise', with no evaluation.

There are everyday opportunities for the young people to gain the practical and social life skills needed for independent living. One young person has appreciated the work that staff have carried out with him on budgeting and one young person has found a keen interest in gardening. One young person said, 'I like food shopping, cooking and baking. My special pasta dish is really good. I use the herbs from the garden and also peppers and garlic.'

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

One young person feels much happier and safer and, therefore, less anxious since another young person has been spending less time in the home. Regarding this young person's periods of absence from the home, following a sustained period of challenging behaviours, an informed risk was taken by a multi-agency team and a safety plan was agreed. This plan states that the young person will not be classed as missing as long as the young person is at one address and co-operates with daily welfare checks. Although this cannot be officially condoned, in practice it has successfully prevented missing from home episodes and thereby dramatically reduced the risk of child sexual exploitation. However, although there is clear documentary evidence of at least daily welfare checks, the recordings of these checks lack detail and do not demonstrate any encouragement given to the young person to return to the home. Examples include 'displayed her normal behaviour', 'refused to return' and 'essentials taken'. The young person said, 'I don't want to return to the home. Staff come and see me every day and the manager constantly texts me and I tell her I am happy and safe. I'm getting my own place soon. Everything is being sorted.'

An allegation made by a young person against a member of staff was taken seriously and correct procedures followed to safeguard the complainant and the alleged perpetrator. However, there was a marked delay in notifying Ofsted of this incident. Furthermore, although police involvement to manage behaviours is rare, on the one recent occasion this was not notified to Ofsted. This is despite it being a serious incident that frightened one young person.

Overall, staff manage some significantly challenging behaviours well and there have been no restraints since the last inspection. Also, reparation and restorative justice is effectively used to avoid unnecessary criminalisation of young people. An example of this is repairing the damage caused in the home and writing a letter apologising for the upset caused.

There is an emphasis on positive reinforcement of good behaviour, which has the desired effect. For example, one young person said, 'I loved our day out on the beach and I was treated to a boat ride because I was good.' Furthermore, there is clear evidence of the new interim manager scrutinising sanction records and overruling decisions if they are felt not to be relevant and proportionate to the particular misdemeanour. However, she recognises that there is still much to do to ensure that all records are of a good standard.

The home is suitably decorated and furnished throughout and young people's bedrooms

are personalised. They now have a trampoline in the back garden which is well used and means that young people are having fun while exercising. However, some staff and young people have expressed concerns about the location of the home. One young person has requested changing bedrooms to the back of the property because 'It is noisy at night, which worries me and then I can't get to sleep.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Since the last inspection, the registered manager has resigned. Satisfactory interim arrangements are in place. For the last five weeks, the post has been covered by a qualified and experienced registered manager from another of the authority's children's homes. However, no application to register has been received by Ofsted.

Recently, there is more evidence of scrutiny of records and data analysis, but neither are yet at a good standard and inconsistent practices remain. The continued staff turnover and levels of staff sickness exacerbate this. The original timescales for the restructure of the wider authority have not been met because there are still 21 vacant positions. This impacts on the stability and future development of this home.

Action has been taken to begin to address the five requirements and four recommendations made at the last inspection. However, none have been met in full.

There is now more evidence of challenge to other relevant agencies to ensure that young people receive the specialist services that they require. This has led to prioritising a fostering match, securing a semi-independence flat, providing a new specialist school, and a work placement.

As planned, the independent monitoring visits are now undertaken by independent reviewing officers. This was because the quality of previous reports by an independent provider was poor. However, the first report by an independent reviewing officer contained inaccuracies and did not include any consultations with young people or their parents, which is a legal requirement. Moreover, the system in place for forwarding the reports to Ofsted is not effective as only one out of a possible four has been received since 31 December 2017.

It remains a challenge to persuade one young person to attend regular health checks, but staff now make timely new appointments to try to avoid drift. The specialist nurse for looked after children confirmed good partnership working with this staff team.

Young people are still not benefiting from independent return home interviews to explore the reasons for going missing and to look at ways to try to prevent a re-occurrence and to keep young people safe. Only three return home interviews have taken place out of a possible 10, so a requirement has been raised to strengthen this important safeguarding process.

Ongoing internal monitoring is still not sufficiently robust. Some key statistics are still not maintained to aid this process. A notable example is the number and timeliness of independent return interviews. Moreover, the variable quality of the required documentation maintained in the home also suggests a lack of stringent internal monitoring by the registered manager and the external auditing. A six-monthly

manager's report on the quality of care provided in the home was forwarded to Ofsted. However, it lacks analysis and evaluation and is not informed and enriched by the views of young people and stakeholders. Consequently, this requirement has been repeated.

Recent records demonstrate a more proactive approach to securing appropriate education that best meets the unique learning and behavioural needs of each young person. However, there is limited evidence of staff ensuring and supporting independent study, especially for one young person, during a sustained period of non-school attendance.

There has been no change to the location of the toileting facilities in this home. The main shower room is located on the ground floor off the open plan communal lounge, kitchen and dining area. This compromises young people's privacy and is not indicative of a homely environment.

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.

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: 1244946

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council, Town Hall,
Library Street, Wigan WN1 1YN

Responsible individual: Lynne Bennett

Registered manager: Post Vacant

Inspector

Lynn O'Driscoll, social care inspector

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