

SC036304

Registered provider: Sefton 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 short- to medium-term care for up to four children, from age seven to 17. The purpose of the home is to prepare children to move to a foster family, long-term residential care, or, when possible, to be reunited with their family.

The registered manager registered with Ofsted in March 2007.

Inspection date: 26 February 2019

Judgement at last inspection: good

Date of last inspection: 24 July 2018

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 declined in effectiveness.

Since the last inspection, two children have moved out of the home and one child has remained. Largely, staff ensure that children's moves are well planned, appropriately supported and consistent with the child's care plan.

Staff forge strong links with the children's schools and play an active role in ensuring that children attend school and make progress from their starting points. Headteachers confirm effective partnership working with the team.

However, staff are not as successful at promoting children's health and well-being. At times, children have missed important health appointments because they have refused to attend. Staff's ability to positively influence children when making decisions about

their health is inconsistent.

Staff's assessment and response to some high-risk situations is weak. For example, staff did not assess the level of risk when a child made threats to kill himself. Although staff shared the information with the child's social worker, there was little evidence of the team implementing strategies to monitor the child's moods. Furthermore, staff have not received any formal training on ligature management. The registered manager took immediate action once this concern was raised at the inspection.

Staff do not always take swift action when a child is placing themselves in danger. For example, staff do not physically remove dangerous items, such as lighters, to protect the child from potentially harming themselves or others. Additionally, staff failed to inform a child's social worker that a child was accessing adult-rated computer games during family contact. Shortfalls in safeguarding practice are compromising children's welfare and safety.

Although the communal areas of the home are maintained to a good standard, the manager had not replaced or repaired a broken wardrobe in a child's bedroom. Children are not, therefore, being provided with the physical necessities that they need. Furthermore, broken furniture detracts from the welcoming and homely environment that the team and children have worked hard at to achieve.

Children's placement and behaviour management plans are informative. Furthermore, staff are skilled at building positive relationships with the children. Despite this, staff's use of physical restraint as a protective measure is high. Restraint records are sufficiently detailed and provide a clear account of the incident. However, not all incidents have been rigorously reviewed by the registered manager. The manager has, therefore, missed opportunities to identify any patterns or trends in children's behaviour or staff's practice.

The requirement raised at the last inspection has been suitably addressed. The home's statement of purpose has been kept under review and a copy has been supplied to Ofsted as required. However, four of the five recommendations raised at the previous inspection have not been met. This does not demonstrate strong and effective monitoring of the home. The registered manager is not using monitoring systems to ensure continuous improvements in the home. Additionally, external monthly monitoring continues to be variable and is still not consistently thorough.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/07/2018	Full	Good
18/05/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
22/02/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
01/06/2016	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 health and well-being standard is that the health and well-being needs of children are met. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff help each child to take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child's health and well-being needs; and understand and develop skills to promote the child's well-being. (Regulation 10(1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(iii)(iv))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that staff develop the necessary skills to enable the children to understand the importance of attending health appointments and that they do so.</p>	19/04/2019
<p>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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; and, take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i)(iii)(vi))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that staff assess risks when children threaten suicide, and that staff have the knowledge, understanding and skills to respond to suicide attempts, for example that staff have appropriate ligature removal training.</p> <p>Ensure that staff share all safeguarding concerns with the child's</p>	19/04/2019

social worker. Ensure that staff take swift action and appropriately intervene when a child is placing himself, or others, in danger.	
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. (Regulation 6(1)(2)(b)(vii)) In particular, repair or replace the child's broken wardrobe.	19/04/2019
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 use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1)(2)(h)) In particular, ensure that all recommendations raised at inspections are satisfactorily addressed.	19/04/2019

Recommendations

- Staff should receive training on ligature management. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered manager should review the effectiveness of all measures of control, discipline and restraint. The review should provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure it meets the needs of each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)
- Any individual appointed to carry out visits as an independent person must make a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children. The independent person must have the relevant skills, experience and professional background, for example in carrying out work of a similar nature, to enable them to reach a rigorous and impartial judgement. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5. & 15.9)

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: SC036304

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Town Hall, Oriel Road, Bootle, Merseyside L20 7AE

Responsible individual: Dwayne Johnson

Registered manager: Sally-Ann Edwards

Inspector

Marina Tully, social care inspector

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