

# 1242116

Registered provider: Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Full 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 have social and emotional difficulties.

The registered manager has been registered since 15 March 2019.

**Inspection dates:** 7 to 8 May 2019

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,** taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 12 September 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
12/09/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
23/02/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
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
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b))	08/05/2019
The registered person must supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care is completed. (Regulation 45 (4)(a))	28/06/2019

### Recommendations

- Provide children with a pleasant and comfortable home that meets their physical necessities. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.7) In particular, make sure that the house and garden are well maintained, decorated to a good standard, and that any damage is repaired in good time.
- Staff in children’s homes should play a full role in helping children understand who they are and where they come from and make sense of their experiences, for example through undertaking life story work. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 16, paragraph 3.14) In particular, staff should have opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and confidence in carrying out life-story work with children. Staff doing life-story work should receive supervision of their practice, support and guidance from an appropriately qualified and experienced practitioner.
- Where children are not participating in full-time education, training or employment, they should be encouraged and supported to engage in a structured daily routine with stimulating and meaningful activities that help sustain or regain confidence in learning or employment. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff receive supervision of their practice, including opportunities for peer supervision, which allows staff to reflect together on their learning and practice and the needs of the

children assigned to their care; and to develop consistent plans to meet children's needs. (Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Young people with complex needs live in this friendly and supportive home. The professional care that young people receive is making a positive difference in their lives. Young people are making important progress in their education, health, emotional well-being and personal safety and experiencing improved family relationships.

Staff provide young people with safe, healthy and nurturing relationships. They give young people the warmth, understanding and affection that they need to feel valued and safe. Staff help young people to feel at ease and to be confident enough to trust and accept help from adults. They encourage and support young people to overcome their reluctance to engage with professionals who can help them.

Staff listen to young people's wishes and feelings and respond to them appropriately. Where young people's preferences are unreasonable, or cannot be met for safeguarding reasons, staff help young people understand why. Staff advocate for young people and are confident enough to challenge colleagues and professionals. They make sure that young people influence the decisions affecting their lives, including how often they see their families, choices about healthcare, education and plans for their future.

The manager makes good decisions about young people coming to live at the home. He carefully matches young people and staff's ability to respond effectively to the young person's assessed needs. He makes sure that staff have training relevant to the personal needs of the young person moving in. He also assesses the young person's compatibility with the young people already living at the home.

None of the young people are presently in full-time education, training or employment. Staff understand the barriers for each young person's learning and are working with the virtual school and education providers to improve young people's education outcomes. Staff encourage young people's skills and talents. A young person's artwork was displayed at a local gallery and won a prize. Another young person worked hard with his tutor to complete a qualification in mathematics. Staff and the local authority employability worker have actively supported a young person to complete a construction qualification at a local college.

However, young people do not have a suitable and structured daily routine of meaningful activities and learning opportunities to help them to return to full-time education and prepare them for adult life.

Young people's health and emotional well-being continue to improve. Staff have an

excellent understanding of young people's specific health and emotional needs and have the relevant skills and knowledge to respond. They support young people to attend health appointments and always seek to make sure that the same member of staff is available to accompany and support young people at meetings, such as those with the child and adolescent mental health services.

Staff help young people to make informed choices about their healthcare and treatment. For example, staff talk with young people about their treatment and the options available to help them, including medication and talking therapies. Staff also help young people to think about the health and legal implications of using cannabis. They listen to young people's views about cannabis, the reasons they use it and how it makes them feel. Together, they consider what young people can do instead of using cannabis, such as using massage to help to relax.

Some parts of the house and garden are not well maintained. Damage to walls, in the lounge and hall, and bedroom furniture has not been fully repaired in good time. A bedroom carpet is stained and needs to be cleaned or replaced.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: good**

Staff's knowledge and professional practice protect young people from harm. The quality of care that young people receive has helped them to become increasingly safer from the risk of criminal and sexual exploitation, grooming through social media and technology, self-harm, violence in the community and going missing from home.

Over time, young people have developed a sense of safety. A therapeutic social worker said, 'The young person likes it here and feels safe. She won't say this, but she feels safe knowing that staff are there for her.'

Staff have a good understanding of each young person's vulnerabilities. They have had training tailored to help them to support the specific needs of young people, including about the risks of sexual exploitation and using technology; giving evidence in criminal proceedings; and mental health.

Staff are vigilant and recognise the signs when young people are struggling and at risk. Guided by up-to-date and well-informed risk assessments and plans, staff act to reduce the dangers to young people's safety. The manager and staff take decisive action when there are serious concerns about young people's safety. They use well-established partnerships with children's services, the designated officer, the police and the local child exploitation and missing team to identify and understand the risks facing young people and take appropriate action that protects them.

However, on one occasion, the manager failed to notify Ofsted of a serious incident when staff called the police to the home to help them manage a young person's dangerous behaviour.

Staff's understanding of the impact of trauma and adverse experiences on young

people's development has helped them to create a home environment where young people feel safe and emotionally secure. Young people are accepted and valued as individuals. They have clear and consistent boundaries and expectations. Staff provide young people with warm and reliable relationships. Young people trust staff enough to start to talk about their experiences, find out more about their family and ask for help.

However, staff need to develop their expertise in life-story work to enable them to play a full role in helping young people understand who they are and make sense of their experiences. Staff doing life-story work should receive supervision of their practice, support and guidance from an appropriately qualified and experienced practitioner.

When young people find it difficult to cope with strong emotions, staff work with them successfully to find constructive solutions. Staff can usually defuse the situation. A young person said, 'My problem is I get angry. Staff do the things that help me. They let me go outside to calm down and talk to me about what is wrong.'

The manager and staff reflect and learn from situations when they have struggled to help young people manage their feelings. They have learned that some young people can be overwhelmed by too much information and when too many staff are trying to help them, which fuels their anger and frustration. Consequently, staff have adapted their approach. They pick the times when young people are most receptive to help, make sure that they use clear and easily understood language and give young people time to hear and understand what they are saying.

The manager and staff's consistent approach is changing young people's behaviour. Their positive actions and use of straightforward and effective consequences have stopped young people using cannabis in the house. They are helping young people to make good choices about their safety and to keep away from trouble. Young people are kind and considerate towards each other. They are also a positive influence on other young people.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The manager is very experienced and qualified. He is also the registered manager of another children's home. He demonstrates the capability to manage both homes appropriately.

The manager is a highly effective and reflective leader. His calm and supportive approach has brought stability and direction to the management of the home. The manager and staff work hard to make sure that young people with complex needs live in a safe and nurturing home.

The manager and staff have a detailed understanding of the progress each young person is making and the priorities for their care. They identify when young people are struggling and escalate their concerns appropriately. They work effectively with the wider support network to make sure that young people receive the best possible support to meet their assessed needs. This approach has included getting the community mental

health service to change its usual working practices and visit the home to maximise the chances of young people engaging with the practitioner.

The manager makes sure that there are always sufficient knowledgeable, experienced, well-trained and qualified staff available to meet children needs. Young people have the continuity of care necessary for them to build secure and healthy relationships with the adults looking after them.

The manager provides each member of staff with excellent support, guidance, encouragement, and practice-related supervision. Staff would also benefit from peer-group supervision. This would enable staff to reflect together on their learning, practice and young people's progress, and make sure that they are using young people's plans consistently to meet their needs.

The responsible individual and manager use thorough monitoring systems to understand the quality of care that children receive. They take effective action to make necessary improvements that benefit children. This has included investing in training to develop staff's knowledge and skills in using relationship-focused approaches to help young people manage their emotions and supporting young people who use cannabis.

However, the manager has not provided Ofsted with the most recent review of the home's quality of care report.

## **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:** 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:** Martyn Swindell

## Inspector

Nick Veysey, social care inspector



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