

SC036304

Registered provider: Sefton 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 two children between the ages of 10 and 18 years. Until 17 June 2019, the home was registered to provide short-term care and accommodation for up to four children. The recent changes were implemented to enable the home to continue to care for a child with complex needs on a permanent basis.

The registered manager has been registered since March 2007.

Inspection dates: 25 to 26 June 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 26 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/02/2019	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
24/07/2018	Full	Good
18/05/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
22/02/2017	Interim	Declined in 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, 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>Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing injury to any person (including the child); and, serious damage to the property of any person (including the child). (Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, before staff restrain a child they must assess the physical environment for potential hazards to prevent causing injury to the child and/or themselves.</p>	27/06/2019

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is safe and effective. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)
- Any sanctions used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. In some cases, it will be important for children to make reparation in some form to anyone hurt by their behaviour, and the staff in the home should be skilled to support the child to understand this and carry it out. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)
- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. A record of supervision should be kept for staff, including the manager. The record should provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with regulation 33(4)(b). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2. and 13.3)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home is currently caring for one child only. The child has lived at the home for over three years and it has recently been confirmed that he will live at the home permanently.

The child lives in a nurturing, supportive and safe home. The staff provide him with high-quality individualised care that promotes his needs and welfare.

The staff team has fostered positive relationships with the child. Staff make him feel welcome, which is helping him to develop a sense of belonging and stability.

The staff team supports the child to keep in touch with his father daily. This is important as it helps him to maintain his family identity. The manager and staff work closely with the child's social worker to make sure that the meetings with his father are safe, positive experiences.

The staff make sure that there are plenty of opportunities for the child to have fun and keep active. He enjoys attending a local performing arts centre, where he received an award for his digital technical support for a performance. Additionally, he was awarded a prize for his performing arts at the local authority's children in care celebrations event. All of this is helping to develop his confidence, self-esteem and talents.

The staff team works effectively with health professionals to promote the child's physical health and emotional well-being. Staff understand his health needs and follow his treatment plan consistently. The staff carefully monitor his health and well-being and act swiftly when they are worried about him. This is making sure that he receives the right medical advice, support and treatment.

The child is struggling in school. His behaviour and reluctance to engage with his education is significantly hindering his progress. The staff team understands the barriers to his learning and is working closely with the school and social worker to find ways to better support him in school.

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

The staff's high levels of support, knowledge and professional practice are keeping the child safe. The manager and staff have a comprehensive understanding of his behaviour and vulnerabilities and recognise the signs when he may be at risk of harm.

The manager and team are vigilant. They provide the child with a high level of supervision as set out in his safety plan. The team's unwavering support and awareness are enabling him to safely take part in activities and socialise with other children in his local community. This is important to his social development.

Through ongoing training, and guidance from therapeutic services, staff are developing their skills to respond to the child when he is upset and distressed. Accordingly, his behaviour has noticeably improved, which in turn makes the home a safer place to live.

On occasions, when strategies have not worked and there has been a serious risk of harm, staff have sought assistance appropriately from health services and the police. Largely, the staff successfully de-escalate unsafe situations and behaviour. When necessary, the staff will physically intervene and use restraint as a safeguarding measure.

In the main, restraint practice is used appropriately and is safe. However, on two occasions, staff did not assess the physical environment before restraining the child, which compromised his and the staff's safety.

The manager's and team's approach to behaviour management is to promote acceptable behaviour through positive role modelling, constant praise, and incentives and rewards.

Although sanctions are rare, those that are used have not always been successful, for example financial reparation. The child would benefit from more creative and restorative strategies that will teach him to recognise and understand the negative impact of his actions and behaviour on himself and others.

Furthermore, the manager's scrutiny of the effectiveness of behaviour management practice, including restraint, could improve.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager provides consistent and child-centred leadership. She and her team have worked tirelessly to adjust the service so that they can continue to provide a good standard of care to a child with complex needs and challenging behaviour.

The manager makes sure that there are always enough staff on duty to provide the child with the care, support and supervision that he needs.

Although most of the team members benefit from having regular practice-related supervision, the manager acknowledged that this level of support and oversight needs to be consistent across the team. Two members of staff had not received practice-related supervision for the past six months. Additionally, the recording of staff's supervision sessions is not always prepared in a timely way.

The team is settled, and most team members have worked at the home for many years. This shows their dedication and commitment to the child and the service.

All staff are experienced and suitably qualified. They receive new and refresher training, including in safeguarding, managing aggression, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

(ADHD) and self-harm. The manager is also looking at ways of resourcing more specialist therapeutic training for the team. Such training would further equip staff with the skills to better support the child's emotional needs.

The independent monitoring of the home is improving. The manager has addressed the inconsistency of the independent visitor and the reports. The service now has an identified person to undertake the independent monitoring of the home. This monitoring is now providing greater scrutiny of the quality of care and protection provided to the child.

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: 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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