

# 2496288

## **Wolverhampton City Council**

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

### **Information about this children's home**

This home is owned and managed by a local authority. The home provides care and accommodation for up to four young people with complex needs.

The current manager has been in post since the home re-opened in June 2019.

This is the first inspection of this home since it was re-registered in June 2019.

**Inspection date:** 10 June 2020

### **This monitoring visit**

This monitoring visit took place following Ofsted being notified of two serious incidents in the home. Due to current restrictions related to COVID-19 (coronavirus) this visit was completed remotely. Inspectors were sent documents by email. They also spoke to children, staff and other professionals using video conferencing and telephone calls.

Managers and leaders do not ensure that children are safe in the home. The registered manager completes matching assessments prior to children arriving to live in the home. Despite this, managers and leaders admit children to the home who are known to present a risk to other children who are currently living in the home. All members of staff who spoke to inspectors raised this during the inspection. However, this had not been escalated or raised under the whistleblowing policy. As a result of the managers' and leaders' poor decision-making, two children were seriously assaulted by other children in the home.

The registered manager has not developed detailed behaviour management plans for children so that staff have enough guidance to be able to manage individual children or the dynamics between them. Staff are not in control in the home and so cannot keep children safe.

The registered manager has not ensured that staff have the necessary skills to manage children's behaviour. Staff are unable to describe how decisions to contact the police are made, and records do not accurately record this either. The police told inspectors that due to the number of calls made by the home they are concerned about how staff manage behaviour in the home. This risks children being criminalised.

The registered manager's oversight is poor. In addition to poor-quality behaviour management plans, physical intervention plans also lack clarity. This lack of oversight has meant that strategies for individual children are not clear, and some plans have the wrong children's names in them. This lack of accurate guidance leaves staff uncertain about how to address behaviour with children.

Staffing arrangements in the home are confused. It is recognised that the current COVID-19 pandemic adds complication to this situation. There is a reliance on sessional staff and agency staff who are not sufficiently trained in key areas, such as physical intervention. In addition, training records for staff are inaccurate so managers cannot know who is appropriately trained to meet children's needs. The sufficiency of appropriately trained and skilled staff in the home is of significant concern.

The registered manager has not ensured that children admitted to the home have needs and plans that are within the scope of the home's statement of purpose. For example, despite the home being for children to stay for periods of up to 20 weeks, several children have stayed far longer than this. This indicates that while children live in the home they do not make the progress according to their plans.

Staff complete 'making it right' sessions with children after incidents. Resolution is not found from these sessions, and children do not learn to take responsibility for their behaviour. Therefore, bullying continues to happen. This increases the likelihood of children continuing to hurt each other and not moving forward with their behaviour.

The registered manager has not notified Ofsted about serious incidents in the home. For example, on one occasion a child was assaulted by a peer and complained to the police. On another occasion, a child was so seriously assaulted that she was concussed. These incidents were only notified to Ofsted when the inspector identified them in the regulation 44 reports and contacted the provider. Another child disclosed to staff about inappropriate sexual activity and harassment, indicating that there was significant risk of sexual exploitation. It is not clear how this was escalated within the local authority, and the child's behaviour management plan was not updated effectively. Staff were left without clear guidance on how to support this child. This failure to notify Ofsted indicates poor judgement about what is a serious event and a lack of understanding of relevant regulations. This has meant that the

regulator has had limited oversight of escalating concerns in the home over a period of months.

Staff recording of incidents is poor, and records for physical interventions do not meet regulation. These records do not help managers and staff understand what has happened and what needs to be put in place to make things safe. As a result, children live in a home where learning and practice development are not embedded.

Staff use institutionalised language in the home and 'lock down' the home when children are 'out of hand'. There are also times when staff have told children to lock themselves in rooms for their own safety. Children who are not involved in incidents feel punished by this and excluded from parts of their home. As a result, children feel unsafe.

Children have 'respite' from the home in a short break children's home. Records of children coming into and leaving the home are incomplete and so it is not clear who is in the home and when. Staff rotas do not include staff's full details. This adds to the confusion about who is in the home. This lack of clarity means that staff cannot know who they are working with or who they are looking after. This creates uncertainty for children and staff.

The independent visitor to the home is ineffective, and their reports do not help the registered manager understand shortfalls in children's care. The independent visitor is employed by the same local authority that operates this home and does not provide independent scrutiny of the home. The independent visitor does not routinely speak to children, parents or professionals to gain their view of care in the home. The independent visitor does not evaluate serious incidents and despite police involvement has not noted any learning or recommendations for the home. Where reports indicate that children are safe, it is not clear how this opinion is reached. Ofsted has not had an accurate view of the home due to the lack of detailed scrutiny by the independent visitor and their poor judgement regarding practice in the home. It has also meant that managers and leaders have a false sense of the quality of care children receive in the home.

The registered manager has not completed the level 5 qualification within the correct timescale. Although there have been some setbacks outside her control, this does not account for the three-year timescale to have lapsed. The home is therefore led by a manager who lacks the qualification for the role.

Some children in the home are not engaged with their learning. It is acknowledged that the current situation means that education is interrupted for many children. However, children and staff noted that more could be done. Despite this acknowledgement, it is not clear what is being done by staff to address this.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date

Inspection type

Inspection judgement

This is the home's first inspection since registration.

## 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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (c))	12/07/2020
In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them. (Regulation 11 (2)(a)(iii)(iv)(v)(xii)(xiii))	12/07/2020
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; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;	21/06/2020

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. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(iv)(b))*	
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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h))*	21/06/2020
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(2)(a))*	21/06/2020
The registered person must ensure that— children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises. (Regulation 21 (b))	21/06/2020
A person may only manage a children's home if— having regard to the size of the home, its statement of purpose, and the number and needs (including any needs arising from any disability) of the children—	12/07/2020

<p>the person has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills to manage the home effectively and lead the care of children.</p> <p>For the purposes of paragraph (1)(b)(i), a person has the appropriate experience and qualification if the person has—</p> <p>by the relevant date, attained—</p> <p>the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare (England) ('the Level 5 Diploma'); or</p> <p>a qualification which the registered provider considers to be equivalent to the Level 5 Diploma.</p> <p>The relevant date is—</p> <p>in the case of a person who starts managing a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 3 years after the date on which that person started managing a home.</p> <p>(Regulation 28 (1)(b)(i)(2)(c)(i)(ii)(3)(a))</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>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—</p> <p>the name of the child;</p> <p>details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;</p> <p>the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;</p> <p>the name of the person who used the measure ('the user'), and of any other person present when the measure was used;</p> <p>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and</p> <p>a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;</p> <p>within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is</p> <p>authorised by the registered person to do so ('the authorised person')—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>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.</p> <p>(Regulation 35</p> <p>(3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)(iv))</p>	<p>12/07/2020</p>

Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4. (Regulation 37 (1)(2)(a))	21/06/2020
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(e))	21/06/2020
The registered provider must appoint, at the registered provider's expense, a person ('the independent person') to visit and report on the children's home carried on by the registered provider. Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), the registered provider may not appoint the following as an independent person— if the registered provider is a local authority, a person who is employed by that local authority in connection with the carrying on of the authority's social services functions (as defined by section 1A of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970(a)) relating to children. (Regulation 43 (1)(3)(a))	12/07/2020
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— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (4)(a)(b))	12/07/2020

\*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

## Information about this inspection

Ofsted is aware of the challenges that COVID-19 is currently posing to those we regulate. During this visit, the inspectors took into consideration the impact of any measures being taken to slow the spread of COVID-19 by the home. This has included the effect these have had on staffing arrangements. The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.



## **Children's home details**

**Unique reference number:** 2496288

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Wolverhampton City Council

**Registered provider address:** Civic Centre, St. Peters Square, Wolverhampton,  
West Midlands WV1 1SH

**Responsible individual:** Rachel King

**Registered manager:** Farai Miller

## **Inspectors**

Karol Keenan, social care inspector

Helen Malanaphy, social care inspector

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