

SC046524

Registered provider: Sheffield City Council

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This secure children's home is operated by a local authority and is approved by the Secretary of State to restrict children's liberty. The home can accommodate up to 10 children and/or young people who are aged between 10 and 17 years.

It provides accommodation for up to five children placed by the Youth Custody Service, and five children accommodated under Section 25 of the Children Act 1989 placed by local authorities.

Admission of any child under Section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who is under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State. Education is provided on site in dedicated facilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2014.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We visited this home on 2 November 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection date: 1 September 2021

Date of last inspection: 10 March 2020

Judgement at last inspection: Improved effectiveness

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 this interim inspection, Ofsted judged that it has sustained effectiveness.

Children are well cared for and develop positive and trusting relationships with the adults who care for them. Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, staffing has remained consistent. This means that any disruption to children's care has been kept to a minimum. This has provided children with consistency and stability and helped them to continue to make progress.

There is cohesive and thoughtful care planning involving a full range of knowledgeable and skilled professionals, such as speech and language therapists, psychologists, social workers and care staff. This multi-disciplinary approach helps staff to gain insight into children's behaviours, their achievements and strengths and the areas where they need additional support. This helps in the development of plans and strategies which are tailored to meet each child's individual needs. In turn, this helps them to grow in confidence and test new skills, such as tolerance, and gain an understanding of their own behaviours and past experiences.

All the children living in the home at the time of this inspection were able to take part in outings and excursions in the wider community. This serves as a useful gauge as to the level of trust they have developed and the progress they have made in improving their self-regulation and coping skills.

The opportunities to be able to go out with members of staff are underpinned by taking part in varied and enriching activities in the home. The new multi-use games area is a particularly well-used and much-enjoyed addition to the home, providing space for children to try out new activities, such as zorbing. Consequently, children are able to enjoy themselves and to widen their interests and experiences.

The use of agency staff during the COVID-19 pandemic has been minimal. However, recruitment checks carried out by the agency providing these staff have not always been consistent, and have not always met the standards required by regulation. This has not compromised the safety of children, due to the high staffing levels and the close supervision of agency staff working in the home. Nevertheless, this shortfall was not identified prior to agency staff starting work.

Staff are exceptionally skilled in supporting children and their parents to rebuild their family relationships when needed. This insightful and sensitive practice is a strength of the home and helps children to reconcile with those who are important to them, and to move forward positively in these relationships.

The home is tidy and clean. Children decorate and personalise their own rooms in a homely and attractive style. However, there are two lounges that the children have access to. One is very comfortable and well decorated and the other is sparse and stark in appearance.

Children were unanimously positive about the variety and quality of food they are offered. Mealtimes are well-ordered, social occasions that help the children to develop social skills and to explore a variety of healthy and tasty food.

Any issues of concern are shared with the correct agencies promptly. This ensures that action plans can be put in place if necessary, to ensure that children are kept safe. Professional safeguarding staff spoke highly of the approach and attitude of the managers and staff, and their willingness to share information and reflect on practice. This approach helps to protect children from harm.

Any incidents involving the use of physical restraint are reviewed and assessed by managers, to ensure that the use of this measure of control is appropriate and proportionate. Children's views are always recorded after these events, to support them to understand why the incident happened and to ensure that they feel safe and fairly treated.

When it is necessary to separate children to protect them, or others, from significant harm, staff ensure that the children are supported throughout the period that they are in their rooms. These incidents are also reviewed by managers to ensure that the use of this measure was appropriate, timely and fair, and did not last longer than necessary. This ensures the safety and welfare of others in the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/03/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10/12/2019	Full	Good
08/01/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10/07/2018	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 registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children’s home; or</p> <p>if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home—</p> <p>if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>the individual is of integrity and good character;</p> <p>the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;</p> <p>the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that all staff working in the home have the required background checks, and that these are carried out before they commence their employment.</p>	<p>31 October 2021</p>

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is, at most times, a homely environment. In particular, ensure that both communal lounge areas are welcoming and comfortable. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Information about this inspection

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.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: SC046524

Provision sub-type: Secure Unit

Registered provider address: Sheffield City Council, Town Hall, Pinstone Street, Sheffield S1 2HH

Responsible individual: Carly Speechley

Registered manager: Kieran Hill

Inspectors

Paul Taylor, Social Care Inspector (lead)
Natalie Burton, Social Care Inspector
Leemya McKeown, Social Care Inspector

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M1 2WD

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