

1263768

Registered provider: Tameside 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 cares for up to three children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The registered manager is not currently working at the home and the assistant manager is leading the home in her absence.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2021

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 requires improvement to be good

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

Date of last inspection: 27 November 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/11/2019	Full	Outstanding
14/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
19/06/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children experience individualised care from staff. Children can identify staff they like and trust. Staff are child centred in their practice and care for children unconditionally.

At times, the challenging behaviours of some children have an impact on other children in the home. As a result, their experience of living in the home is adversely affected. Staff have a good understanding of each child's needs. They care for children in a way which seeks to ensure that the competing needs of each child are met.

One child has been supported to return home to her family in line with her care plan. Staff worked with the child, her family and social worker to support a planned return home. This support continued for several weeks after her return home to provide some continuity of care and helped to secure a positive outcome for the child and her family.

Children understand their right to make complaints. Two complaints have been made by children in the reporting period. They have both been responded to swiftly and appropriately by managers and issues resolved. Children have received a written response detailing actions taken to address their concerns. This helps children to feel their views are important and understand that they can have a direct impact on the quality of care they receive.

All children are in full-time education and making progress from their starting points. Education is valued and promoted. When issues arise in school, the home staff respond quickly to ensure that this does not escalate and have an impact on children's educational placements. One child has additional one-to-one tuition in the home and the tutor praised the commitment of staff to support this.

Children are supported to develop their interests. One child has recently started to attend army cadets to support his wish to pursue a career in the army. Another child is a talented footballer and plays for a local team. Children are supported to broaden their horizons and have aspirations for their futures.

Children are helped to develop and maintain positive relationships with parents and other significant people in their lives. One child has been on holiday with his parent for the first time and is establishing a relationship that was previously absent. Supporting children and families in this way gives children a sense of belonging and identity. It increases their support networks now and as they move into adulthood.

Some areas of the home require repair and redecoration. One child's bedroom window needs replacing. The bathroom needs refurbishment. Communal areas of the home lack personalisation. They do not reflect the lives of the children living in

the home. The garden is large and enclosed but does not provide children with an interesting and creative space to spend time. There is no shed and children's bicycles are kept outside. Downstairs, internal doors are locked at night, meaning that children do not have access to the living room or kitchen. As a result, children do not have reasonable access to all areas of the home as is expected in a family environment.

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

Children's risk assessments address all identified areas of concern. They are regularly reviewed and there is good management oversight of them. However, assessments do not contain information about previous risk levels. There is therefore nothing which supports staff and children to understand any changes to risk levels and to monitor progress, trends or patterns. Some parts of the risk assessments are generic responses and do not reflect the needs of individual children. As a result, staff and children do not always have all the information they need to understand risks and the different responses required for each child to manage these effectively.

Children's case records are cumbersome and difficult to navigate. This does not support children to access information that is written about them or contribute to their records. It is also difficult for staff not familiar with the recording systems to access information which supports them in caring for the children. Inaccuracies in recording from other staff within the local authority are not challenged and, as a result, children's records do not always contain the correct information.

Children rarely go missing from the home. When they do, there is an appropriate response from the staff team. Arrangements are in place for independent return home interviews. The outcome of these interviews is fed back to staff. This supports staff to understand the context of children's behaviours and put plans in place to keep them safer.

Physical and emotional risks posed to children using social media are well understood. Staff take swift practical action to keep children safe by removing children's devices when this is appropriate and working with the child to develop their understanding of risks. Children are given information to increase their knowledge and strategies to build their resilience and self-esteem. There is good information-sharing between staff, families and professionals that provides a coordinated and consistent response from adults, which helps to protect children from harm.

Children are supported to take age-appropriate risks and develop a sense of personal responsibility and independence. One child has been supported to develop friendships locally with children her age. Staff have met with the parents of those children and ensured that the arrangements in place for the child when in the community keep her safe.

Restraint is not used in the home. However, police have been called out on several occasions to manage the behaviour of one child. Although there has been improvement in the behaviours of this child, strategies in place to help them regulate their behaviours are not yet having sufficient impact.

Identification and recording of significant incidents are comprehensive. Records detail the incidents of concern and the response from staff is clear and appropriate. Children are supported to reflect on incidents they have been involved in through one-to-one work with staff. This helps children to express their feelings and views and provides staff with information they need to support the child to reduce the likelihood of these situations recurring.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Leadership and management of the home lack consistency. The registered manager has had several periods of absence over recent months and is not currently working at the home. In her absence, the home is being managed by the assistant manager, who is suitably skilled and experienced.

Ofsted has not been formally notified about the manager's absences. In addition, there has been a lack of notification about referrals to the local authority designated officer in respect of staff conduct. Changes to the statement of purpose for the home have not been shared with Ofsted. This lack of formal communication and information-sharing has an impact on the regulator's ability to maintain effective oversight of practice in the home and assess any impact on the quality of care provided to children.

There are significant gaps in supervision for some staff, although more recently all staff have been supervised. It is too early to evidence that this practice will be maintained. Some supervision records are task orientated and show little evidence of discussions about the progress and care of children. The assistant manager has not had formal supervision for several months, despite undertaking additional responsibilities in the absence of the registered manager. Supervision is not being used consistently to support staff to reflect on their practice and to receive support and challenge from their manager to help them undertake their roles effectively.

Staff are, without exception, extremely passionate about and committed to their work. Staff value highly the support offered to them by the registered manager and assistant manager and say that both managers are positive role models for child-centred practice. Staff work well as a team to deliver positive outcomes for children. One member of staff said, 'I have been a looked after child myself, and if I could have chosen a team to look after me, I would choose this one without a doubt.'

Visits to the home by the independent person are not always completed on site. Some oversight has been carried out via telephone calls and documents reviewed via email. This has not been challenged by the registered manager or responsible individual. There is no rationale for this practice. As a result, there is a lack of robust

external challenge to the registered manager that supports practice improvement and ensures that children are safeguarded effectively.

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, The 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 notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation;</p> <p>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious;</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;</p> <p>a child protection enquiry involving a child —</p> <p>is instigated; or</p> <p>concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.</p> <p>A notification made under this regulation—</p> <p>must include details of—</p> <p>the matter;</p> <p>the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and</p> <p>any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter;</p> <p>must be made or confirmed in writing. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e) (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))</p>	<p>12 November 2021</p>

If the person who is in day-to-day charge of the children’s home proposes to be absent from the home for a continuous period of 28 days or more, the registered person must give notice in writing to HMCI of the proposed absence.

12 November
2021

Except in the case of an emergency or unforeseen absence, a notice under paragraph (1) must—

be given no later than one month before the proposed absence commences, or within such shorter period as may be agreed with HMCI; and

specify with respect to the proposed absence—

its length or expected length;

the reason for it;

the arrangements which have been made for running the home during the absence;

the address, name and qualifications of the person who will be responsible for the home during the absence;

in the case of the absence of the registered manager, the arrangements that have been, or are proposed to be, made for appointing another person to manage the home during the absence, including the proposed date by which the appointment is to be made.

If the absence arises as a result of an emergency or is unforeseen, the registered person must give notice of the absence—

within one week of the beginning of the absence; and

specifying the matters in paragraph (2)(b).

If the notice required under paragraph (2) or (3) has not been given as required, it must be given without delay.

The registered person must notify HMCI of the return to duty of the person in day-to-day charge of the home not later than 7 days after the date of that person’s return.

(Regulation 48 (1) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v) (3)(a)(b) (4) (5))

<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff receive supervision that supports them to reflect on their practice, and with the frequency detailed in the organisation’s policy on supervision.</p>	<p>30 November 2021</p>
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>the privacy of children is appropriately protected;</p> <p>children can access all appropriate areas of the children’s home’s premises; and</p> <p>any limitation placed on a child’s privacy or access to any area of the home’s premises—</p> <p>is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home;</p> <p>is necessary and proportionate;</p> <p>is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and</p> <p>allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person must ensure that communal areas of the home are not locked at night.</p>	<p>12 November 2021</p>
<p>The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children’s home at least once each month.</p> <p>When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—</p> <p>if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires;</p> <p>to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home’s records (except for a child’s case records, unless the child</p>	<p>30 November 2021</p>

<p>and the child’s placing authority consent) as the independent person requires.</p> <p>A visit by the independent person to the home may be unannounced. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person must ensure that the independent person conducts on-site visits to the home and must escalate concerns if these do not take place.</p>	
<p>The registered person must—</p> <p>keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and</p> <p>notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))</p>	<p>30 November 2021</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all repairs and refurbishments to the home are completed in a timely manner. One child’s bedroom window should be replaced. Damage to walls should be repaired. The leak in the bathroom should be addressed and the broken toilet flush replaced. Consideration should be given to the provision of outside storage for children’s bicycles and play equipment. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that practice in relation to identification and review of risk supports staff and children to understand changes in risk levels over time. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 43, paragraph 9.12)
- The registered person should ensure that children’s care records are written and collated in a way which makes them accessible to children. Children should be actively encouraged to read their records and to add further information to them. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraphs 14.5 and 14.6)
- The registered person should ensure that written information provided by professionals external to the home is accurate and ensure any inaccuracies are challenged and rectified. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Information about this 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: 1263768

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

Registered provider address: Town Hall, Market Street, Hyde, Tameside SK14 1AL

Responsible individual: Tracy Morris

Registered manager: Sally Hallwood

Inspector

Dawn Parton, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at reports.ofsted.gov.uk/.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: eepurl.com/iTrDn.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021