

1244946

Registered provider: Wigan Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home is registered to provide care for up to two children who may experience social or emotional difficulties. The registered manager has been in post since December 2020.

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.

We last visited this setting on 9 March 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 March 2022

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: 16 March 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
28/01/2020	Full	Good
12/02/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
29/05/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children live in a welcoming and nurturing home. They personalise their bedrooms to reflect their individual tastes and personalities. There are many pictures on the living room walls displaying positive images of the children. This gives children a sense of belonging and ownership.

Children build secure relationships with staff at the home. This promotes their emotional well-being and helps them to talk openly about their feelings. One child said, 'Staff are great and I can talk to them about things which I can't speak to others about.'

Staff support children with education and training. They have good links with local providers which helps children to access suitable programmes. One child plans to begin full-time employment on completion of his current training programme. This helps children to improve their skills, confidence and aspiration.

Staff work creatively with health therapists in supporting children. They develop visual aids with children to provide information in a more accessible format, such as a wall chart. This helps to raise children's awareness and reduce risks related to issues such as substance misuse.

Staff support children to prepare for independent living. Staff encourage them to complete a programme of independent living skills which covers a broad range of issues. This means that children move into independent accommodation with higher levels of confidence.

Children attend monthly group meetings to discuss their wishes and feelings. Staff consider children's suggestions for activities, home improvements and cooking. This ensures that children feel listened to and helps to personalise their home.

Staff complete regular key-work sessions with children. This helps children to reflect on their behaviours and actions. It also helps children to learn about different cultures and to talk openly in a safe environment.

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

The home has a calm and relaxed atmosphere which helps children to feel settled. One child said, 'It's quiet here and I feel safe.'

Staff use de-escalation techniques to help children to manage their behaviour. This ensures that physical interventions are rarely required. This means that staff maintain positive working relationships with children.

Children have clear missing from home risk management strategies. This ensures that staff work collaboratively and consistently to keep children safe. This helps to reduce the likelihood of children going missing and the length of time of each episode.

The registered manager will challenge local authorities when a child's needs are not being met. This ensures that children receive the right level of care and support. A social worker stated that, '[name of child]'s transition plan had not been adhered to, therefore the registered manager followed the local authority escalation process to resolve the issue within a week.'

Members of staff lock an internal door every night and use an external door alarm for prevent children from going missing from care. This prevents children from having access to all areas of their home and restricts their liberty.

Staff complete risk management plans for each child to identify and reduce risks. However, one child's plan does not include all known risks and contains contradictory information. This affects how well the staff team can manage and minimise the child's risks.

Staff deliver direct work with children on a regular basis. This raises children's awareness of issues such as online safety and gives them advice on how to stay safe. Staff also monitor children's use of social media sites to protect them from online harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has introduced clear processes throughout the home to ensure that practice is safe and consistent. This ensures that arrangements for the management of medication, for example, are robust.

Managers and leaders build good relationships with parents and social workers. This helps to secure better outcomes for children. A social worker stated, 'They have worked well with me and the child's parents to really good effect.'

Staff receive regular monthly supervision and attend an annual appraisal. This helps them to reflect on their performance and to set targets for the year ahead. This ensures that staff continue to develop and improve the quality of care for children. One parent said, 'Staff are amazing, I can't fault them whatsoever.'

The staff team benefits from attending regular team meetings by sharing good practice. Staff also access a range of training to support children's needs. However, the manager does not record ongoing staff training in the workforce plan. This affects the manager's evaluation of staff training.

Staff feel very well supported by the leadership team. Team members bring a range of skills and experience to support children. A social worker stated, 'The staff are flexible and they adapt to meet children's needs.'

The registered manager provides a regular quality of care review. The views of children, parents and external holders are not consistently included in this report. This affects the analysis and evaluation of the quality of care.

Managers track and review all safeguarding incidents and reports. However, they do not report all significant events to the appropriate authorities. This can affect children's welfare and safety.

The registered manager keeps the home's statement of purpose under review. This ensures that the document is a true reflection of the home's details and current arrangements.

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>help each child to understand how to keep safe. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii))</p> <p>In particular, to ensure that children's risk management plans include all known risks as detailed in their care plan. Risk management plans should be clear and concise and not include contradictory statements related to children's risks.</p>	20 May 2022
<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>	20 May 2022

<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>This specifically relates to the lounge door being locked every night which prevents children's access to the kitchen. It also relates to the use of an external door alarm.</p>	
<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. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))</p>	<p>20 May 2022</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the workforce plan contains information relating to ongoing training for the current staff team and their continuing professional development. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should ensure that a review is undertaken of the quality of care that focuses on the experiences of children living at the home. This should include feedback and comments from children about the home. The review should also include the registered person's analysis and conclusions. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraphs 15.2 to 15.4)

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: 1244946

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Wigan Council

Registered provider address: Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council, Town Hall,
Library Street, Wigan WN1 1YN

Responsible individual: Shirley Parkinson

Registered manager: Daniel Thornber

Inspector

Mark Woodbridge, Social Care Inspector

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