

1263766

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 four children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and may have learning difficulties.

Three children were living at the home at the time of this inspection.

The registered manager post has been vacant since January 2021. There has been no interim manager in post since the last inspection.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 May 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 1 February 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/02/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
04/12/2019	Full	Good
12/02/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
03/10/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Poor decision-making about children moving into the home, ineffective leadership and management and inconsistent staffing have significantly affected children's progress and experiences.

Since the last inspection, two children have moved on from the home. Although this was in line with their care plans, staff say they were unable to give these children the time and attention they needed towards the end of their time living at the home. This was due to the pressures of new children with high levels of need moving into the home during this period.

Two children have recently come to live at the home within a 10-day period of each other. The children have similar needs and vulnerabilities. Both children are subject to court directed orders which restrict their liberty. Pre-admission risk assessments used to inform decision-making about these children moving into the home are of insufficient quality. One of these assessments completely fails to address the needs of the second child. The impact of these admissions on the child already being cared for at the home was not adequately considered. As a result of these shortfalls in practice, the experience and progress of all three children living in the home have been adversely affected.

Children say that they enjoy living at the home when they are being cared for by the permanent staff team and when staff have the time to spend with them. Too often they are not being cared for by these staff, due to an over-reliance on the use of agency staff and staff from the local authority's other homes. These arrangements mean that children do not have a consistent group of adults around them that they can build secure and trusting relationships with. In addition, these non-permanent staff do not have a full understanding of the needs of the children, which places children at increased risk of harm.

One child, who has lived at the home for some time, attends college and has enrolled to continue with her course in the next academic year. She is a talented artist and has aspirations for a career in the creative arts.

Children who are not in education are not being provided with any learning in the home. Staff say that one child who could access online tutoring is unable to do so as she does not have a laptop. Efforts have not been made to ensure that this equipment is provided for her in a timely manner.

Children who are not accessing education are also not being provided with a structured day. They are able to go out into the community during the school day. Children often miss breakfast as they are allowed to lie in bed. This lack of structure and learning does not provide children with the skills and experience they need to support a return to formal education.

Food eaten by children is often different from the menu agreed by children and staff each week. Children are still regularly eating fast food and unhealthy snacks. At the last inspection, a recommendation was made in relation to children eating a healthy and balanced diet. Insufficient progress has been made in addressing this.

At the previous inspection, a requirement was also made that children and staff are provided with clear written guidance in relation to the support that should be provided to children who smoke. No action has been taken since the last inspection to ensure that this guidance is in place. As a result, children's health is not being supported effectively.

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

Children are not being safeguarded effectively. Staff are unable to fulfil their duty to keep children safe as they do not have good-quality risk management and risk reduction plans in place to inform their practice. Risk management plans do not contain clear strategies for staff to follow to manage risk safely. Children admitted to the home since the last inspection do not have behaviour support plans in place. This lack of written guidance means that children are being cared for by staff who do not have the information they need to undertake their roles effectively.

Staff do not have the training they need to keep children safe. In particular, staff have not been trained to respond to a child who self-harms with ligatures. The need for this training was identified in the pre-admission assessment. Despite the child's admission being planned, no arrangements were put in place for staff to receive this training before her arrival. This lack of training places the child at risk of significant harm.

Arrangements put in place to care for a child subject to a court directed order are inadequate and place her at risk of further harm. Agency staff have been commissioned to provide the two-to-one support that this child needs. These agency staff work in isolation to the rest of the staff team. They provide supervision of the child but are not otherwise involved in her day-to-day care. The child told the inspector that she found this upsetting and unhelpful. The practice of these staff and the way that this model of care is experienced by this child is oppressive and not child-centred.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that these agency staff have the skills, knowledge and experience to care for the child. They do not know if safer recruitment practices have been followed when employing these workers. The interim deputy manager, who is in day-to-day charge of the home, says she does not always know which agency staff will be on shift each day. Staffing rotas do not provide the names of these staff. Inadequate leadership and management oversight of these arrangements places children at risk.

Children with court orders that direct they need higher ratios of staff supervision are not always being provided with the levels of supervision required. One child, who

should have one-to-one care, was able to leave the home without any staff supervision. Another child was able to drink alcohol and returned home under the influence of drink while being cared for with two-to-one supervision in the community.

No serious incidents have been notified to Ofsted since the last inspection. Children's care records show that there have been a number of serious incidents involving two children during this period. These incidents include children being at high risk of self-harm, children going missing, and children making allegations. This lack of information-sharing, as required by regulation, does not enable Ofsted to evaluate the quality of practice and assess if the correct actions have been taken to safeguard children.

Children's care records contain the required statutory information from placing social workers. Children's care records generally lack organisation. As a result, it is not possible to see if all required information is in place. Records for all three children are kept in one file. The lack of an effective system for storing children's care records means that children, staff and those involved in the external scrutiny of practice are not able to easily access information.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leadership and management were judged inadequate at the last inspection. No progress has been made to address the shortfalls identified at the previous inspection.

There has been no registered manager at the home for 16 months. An interim agency manager left the home shortly after the last inspection. He has not been replaced. For the last three months, an inexperienced interim deputy manager has been in day-to-day charge of the home.

The statement of purpose for the home is not up to date. A requirement was made about this at the last inspection. The certificate of registration displayed in the home is not current. Leaders and managers have not been proactive in ensuring that the home is functioning in line with regulation.

Leaders and managers have allowed new children to come to live at the home without sufficient permanent staff in place to meet their needs. They have been ineffective in their assessments and decision-making about the matching of the needs of these children. This has adversely impacted children and the permanent staff team.

Staff are not receiving formal supervision of their practice. The interim deputy manager has also not received formal supervision since taking up this role eight months ago. This is of particular concern given she is in day-to-day charge of the home in the absence of a registered or interim manager. Lack of supervision was raised at the last inspection and a requirement was raised. The absence of formal

supervision of practice means that staff are not receiving the support and challenge they need to provide a high quality of care to children.

The independent visitor to the home provides strong challenge to leaders and managers and raises their concerns about practice and decision-making in the home. However, there has been no effective response to the issues raised. This means that opportunities to use this external scrutiny to reflect on and improve practice are missed.

There is little tangible evidence of oversight from senior leaders and managers. The new responsible individual has not visited the home since taking on the role. No action plan was put in place to address the requirements and recommendations from the last inspection. Many of these requirements and recommendations have not been met. Systems are not in place for the monitoring and evaluation of practice. As a result, there is no framework in place for driving practice improvement and ensuring that children receive a high quality of care that safeguards them effectively.

Due to the serious concerns raised during this inspection, Ofsted has served the local authority with a restriction of accommodation notice. This means that no more children can come to live at the home during the period of restriction.

We have also issued compliance notices in respect of regulation 12, the protection of children standard, and regulation 33, employment of staff. We will be undertaking regular monitoring of the home to ensure that these notices are met within timescales.

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 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>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v))</p> <p>Specifically, that the registered person should ensure that:</p> <p>risk assessments address all known risks and include clear strategies and actions for staff to follow to keep children safe;</p> <p>staff, including non-permanent staff, have the skills and training to be able to identify and respond to safeguarding risks to children, and in particular, all staff should have face-to-face training to respond effectively to safeguard children who self-harm with ligatures.</p> <p>The provider must ensure that all staff, including non-permanent staff, understand children’s risk assessments and their roles and responsibilities in protecting children.</p>	<p>5 June 2022</p>
<p>*The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p>	<p>5 June 2022</p>

<p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))</p> <p>Specifically, that the registered person must ensure that all staff receive regular, good-quality supervision of their practice from a person with the appropriate experience to do so. Staff should receive a written record of their supervision.</p>	
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>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)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h))</p>	<p>6 August 2022</p>
<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>help each child to understand how to keep safe</p>	<p>5 June 2022</p>

<p>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)(b))</p> <p>Specifically, that the registered person ensures that:</p> <p>children understand the home's expectations in relation to them smoking and staff have access to clear policies in relation to children who smoke;</p> <p>arrangements are in place to demonstrate that all non-permanent staff have satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service checks and have the training, skills and experience to care for children living in the home.</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 — is instigated; or 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>	5 June 2022
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p>	5 June 2022

<p>that arrangements are in place to ensure the effective induction of each child into the home;</p> <p>that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c))</p> <p>Specifically, that the registered person ensures that:</p> <p>children are only admitted to the home when a comprehensive pre-admission assessment is in place which considers the needs of all children living in the home and the numbers, skills and experience of staff;</p> <p>the ratio of staff to children is at all times meeting the requirements of court directed orders and the child's placement plan.</p>	
<p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff—</p> <p>help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study;</p> <p>promote opportunities for each child to learn informally</p> <p>maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement;</p> <p>help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible; and</p> <p>that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(v)(vi)(viii)(x)(b))</p>	<p>6 August 2022</p>

<p>Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children’s home.</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4;</p> <p>ensure that the records are kept up to date; and</p> <p>retain the records for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c))</p> <p>Specifically, that the registered person ensures that staff rosters clearly record the names of non-permanent staff working on each shift.</p>	<p>5 June 2022</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>5 June 2022</p>
<p>A certificate of registration issued in respect of any establishment or agency shall be kept affixed in a conspicuous place in the establishment or at the agency. (Section 28, Care Standards Act 2000)</p> <p>Specifically, that the registered person ensures that the certificate of registration on display is current and accurate.</p>	<p>5 June 2022</p>
<p>The registered person must give notice in writing to HMCI, as soon as it is reasonably practicable to do so, if any of the following events take place or are expected by the registered person to take place—</p> <p>a person other than the registered person carries on or manages the children’s home;</p> <p>a person ceases to carry on or manage the home. (Regulation 49 (a)(b))</p>	<p>5 June 2022</p>

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure each child is eating a healthy, balanced diet and is eating regularly. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 33 paragraph 7.3).
- The registered person should ensure that children's care records are collated in a way which makes them accessible to staff and 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)

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: 1263766

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: Jamie Pope

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Dawn Parton, Social Care Inspector

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