

SC040500

Registered provider: Salford City Council

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this secure 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 cares for up to 27 children aged between 10 and 18 years. The home was caring for 23 children at the time of this inspection.

All places available at this home are commissioned on a contractual basis by the Youth Custody Service. The Youth Custody Service may, under certain circumstances, permit local authority children's services to spot purchase a vacant bed at the home to enable a local authority to place a child under section 25 of the Children Act 1989. The admission of any child aged under 13 years under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

The commissioning of health services in this home is the statutory responsibility of NHS England under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Education is provided on site, in dedicated facilities.

The manager is in the process of registering with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 23 June 2022

Date of last inspection: 18 January 2022

Judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At these inspections, the inspector(s) evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The care of children

It is pleasing that the issues identified at the previous inspection continue to subside. Staff spoke with enthusiasm about how the manager has brought about change that has reignited their enthusiasm for their work.

Care, education and health staff work in a coordinated way. They deliver individualised programmes of support that promote children's social, physical, emotional and mental health needs effectively.

There continues to be a strong principle of 'child first' that runs throughout the centre. Children are provided with good opportunities to express their views about the home and to contribute to their plans. They have regular access to independent advocacy services, who now take a role in chairing monthly meetings with children from each house unit.

Children told inspectors that they feel well cared for and respected by staff. Staff work hard to overcome barriers and develop trusting and secure relationships with the children. They use these relationships well to make children feel safe and to better understand, manage and change the behaviours that led to them being in a secure home.

Although staffing has improved overall, there continues to be a need for children to spend time locked in their bedrooms doing activities. This has reduced significantly and is now restricted to weekends. Children told inspectors that they understand and generally accept that this is necessary to keep them safe. However, children also spoke about how, at times, this is not equitable across the centre.

The safety of children

Children say that they feel safe and have confidence in staff to keep them safe. Individual risk management and safety plans are developed in conjunction with mental health professionals. Staff understand and implement these plans in a trauma-informed way, successfully helping children to improve their behaviour and better understand and reduce their risks and vulnerabilities.

A back-to-basics approach has been effective in helping staff better understand and re-embed the principles and systems for keeping children safe. This is work in progress and runs alongside managers holding staff to account when incidents of unsafe practice have emerged. When concerns emerge, a multi-agency response is

promoted by managers, ensuring that matters are investigated in the best interests of the child.

There is an increased awareness and better management of the environment. Children making weapons and issues relating to contraband have continued to present a challenge for staff. Positively, staff have become more proactive in their responses, reporting concerns quickly and taking steps to investigate, minimise risk and reduce the potential for recurring incidents.

Information-sharing with Ofsted has improved. Managers are now ensuring that Ofsted is notified and kept informed when serious incidents occur. However, some notifications are of poor quality. This makes it difficult for the regulator to make a thorough assessment of the actions taken in response to safeguarding concerns.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

Issues that limited time for managers to manage are reducing and strong leadership is increasingly evident. Managers are working hard to implement a well-thought-out and aspirational improvement plan. Key to the success of this plan is the restructuring of the management team and staffing model, which is well under way.

Suitable progress has been made to address the requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection. There has been a good focus on raising staff awareness and developing systems and procedures that are designed to keep children safe.

Management oversight is much stronger than previously reported. Managers are using a range of quality assurance processes to improve the overall quality of care. Shortfalls are addressed quickly, and any points of learning are shared with staff to improve practice.

A generally successful recruitment drive has gone some way towards improving staffing levels. Managers and experienced staff are providing good levels of training and support for newer staff. This is helping less experienced staff to develop the necessary skills to work in this highly complex environment.

Formal practice-based supervision is being used more effectively and further supports the development of all staff. A standardised format for recording supervision is being introduced and should go some way to addressing the poor quality of some supervision records.

Shortfalls from the previous inspection relating to education have not been reviewed at this visit and will be considered as part of the next full inspection.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/01/2022	Full	Good
03/08/2021	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
07/01/2020	Full	Outstanding
21/05/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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 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>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for 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>demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—</p> <p>feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and</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)(d)(f)(g)(ii)(h))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that staffing is arranged in a way that further reduces the time children spend locked in their bedrooms doing activities, and that when this is necessary to keep children and staff safe, leaders and managers maintain close oversight and ensure it is fair and equitable to all children centre-wide.</p>	28/07/2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that supervision records are detailed and provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with regulation. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 13.3)
- The registered person must ensure that regulation 40 notifications are sufficiently detailed to enable the regulator to make a thorough assessment of the action taken by the home's staff in response to the event. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.13)
- The registered person and education leaders should:
 - urgently reinstate the breadth of the curriculum and ensure that the post-16 curriculum is sufficiently ambitious to help
 - children to progress to meaningful higher-level education, training or employment
 - ensure that all children's behaviour in lessons is appropriate and respectful and that any disruptive behaviour is challenged
 - effectively
 - ensure that all teachers provide helpful written feedback on children's work to help them to make the rapid progress they
 - are capable of
 - ensure that residential staff are trained to support children with their learning on accommodation units to ensure that
 - their work is of a consistently high standard and contains appropriate language and content.

('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18)

Secure children's home details

Unique reference number: SC040500

Provision sub-type: Secure Unit

Registered provider: Salford City Council

Registered provider address: Civic Centre, Chorley Road, Swinton, Manchester, M27 5DA

Responsible individual: Zoe Fearon

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Paul Scott, Social Care Inspector
Elaine Allison, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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