

SC046524

Registered provider: Sheffield City Council

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this secure children's home

This home is managed by a local authority. It is approved by the Department for Education to restrict children's liberty. The home can accommodate up to 10 children aged between 10 and 17 years. At the time of this inspection, there were four children living at the home.

The home provides care for up to five children placed by the Youth Custody Service and five children placed under Section 25 of the Children Act 1989 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 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 registered manager left the home in July 2022. Steps are being taken to appoint a new manager. In the interim period, an acting manager and the head of education are currently overseeing the day-to-day operations of the home.

Inspection date: 12 July 2022

Date of last inspection: 1 February 2022

Judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspectors 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

Children living at the home have established trusting and meaningful relationships with staff. Inspectors observed a warm and relaxed atmosphere between the staff and the children. The decor and furnishings reflect a homely environment and children have personalised their bedrooms. This helps the children to feel settled and relaxed in their surroundings.

Staff know and understand the children's needs, risks and vulnerabilities well. The members of the multi-disciplinary team, which includes health, education and care professionals, all work together to promote the well-being of the children. In this current climate of staff and management vacancies in the home, the staff are working together across disciplines to ensure that the children continue to receive the support that they need.

All the children are engaged in education. They are motivated to learn and their attendance is excellent. For children who struggle in a classroom environment, individualised plans are put in place that reflect their learning style. The children have aspirations for their future, and they leave the home with further training and employment opportunities already in place.

Specialist services, including drug and alcohol workers and youth workers, undertake weekly sessions with the children when these are identified needs for individual children. Equally, children who have undiagnosed learning and mental health needs undergo cognitive and psychological assessments. This means that children's support plans and behaviour plans better reflect their needs.

Children are encouraged to voice their views and opinions. They are confident in expressing themselves when something is troubling them. Staff are attentive and listen to the children and act on their wishes and feelings when possible and appropriate. Children say that they can go to any staff with their concerns and feel that they would be treated fairly and with respect.

Children enjoy spending time with their parents and wider family. Staff recognise how important these relationships are to the children and, when needed, they help and support the children to manage and repair relationships with their parents.

Transitions into and out of the home are done sensitively and consideration is given to the child's situation, where they have come from and how they may be feeling. Detailed planning and mobility activities are tailored to children's moving arrangements, including children being able to visit their new home and attending

interviews. The partnership between the home and the local authorities ensures that ongoing support is in place.

The safety of children

The safety and well-being of the children is central to the wraparound care they receive. Children's childhood histories are known by all staff, which gives a greater understanding of how these impact on their behaviour. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and underpin the strategies used to address poor behaviour.

There is an effective and collaborative approach to managing children's behaviours and reducing risks to their safety. The use of measures of control, including physical restraint, is proportionate and in line with the home's internal procedures and conforms to regulations. Managerial oversight and evaluation are timely, and staff and children are debriefed following all measures of control. This ensures that any issues of concern are identified and addressed immediately.

All complaints and allegations are investigated. Referrals to the local authority designated officer are made in a timely manner and there is effective communication and oversight with the manager. Children receive feedback regarding the outcome of their complaint. This level of scrutiny promotes transparency across the service.

There has been a delay in managers notifying Ofsted of significant events in accordance with regulations. On two occasions, Ofsted was not notified about a child receiving hospital treatment. While this oversight was acknowledged by leaders and managers, it does not reassure Ofsted that all significant incidents are reported as required.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

The home does not have a registered manager. There are interim arrangements for internal staff to act up into the post of manager. The registered provider has taken steps to recruit into this position. However, the timescales to ensure that a manager is in post and has applied to register with Ofsted must be met to ensure that the home operates legally.

The home is currently using a small number of regular agency staff as it continues to recruit to care staff vacancies across the service. However, two recently recruited agency staff completed shadow shifts before all employment checks were concluded. This means that individuals working with children are potentially not safe to do so.

When staff practice falls short of acceptable standards of care, the actions taken by managers to address these issues are not always well recorded. Furthermore, managers do not always record when staff complete additional training as recommended as part of their performance reviews. These shortfalls prevent leaders and managers from establishing whether staff practice is improving.

Staff do not receive regular supervision in line with the home's policy. Staff say that they feel supported by the management team but that formal supervision is 'a bit hit and miss'. Consequently, staff practice is not monitored effectively.

Children continue to receive care from a committed and dedicated team. Children say that they enjoy a range of activities and that the food is good. The children engage well with staff and each other, and they are making good progress. Currently, the absence of a registered manager has little impact on the children. However, the registered provider has given reassurance that occupancy levels will not increase until a new manager is registered with Ofsted.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/02/2022	Full	Outstanding
01/09/2021	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
10/03/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10/12/2019	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>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)(d))</p>	10 August 2022
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>undertake appropriate continuing professional development;</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and</p> <p>have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c))</p>	10 August 2022
<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>	10 August 2022

<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>	
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Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that leaders and managers are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. In particular, leaders and managers must keep detailed records of their discussions with staff when practice issues have been identified. Leaders and managers must record and evidence any additional training staff have undertaken. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Secure children's home details

Unique reference number: SC046524

Provision sub-type: Secure unit

Registered provider: Sheffield City Council

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

Responsible individual: Sally Williams

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Cath Sikakana, Social Care Inspector

Debbie Foster, Social Care Inspector

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