

SC046524

Registered provider: Sheffield City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this secure children's home

This secure children's home is owned and managed by a local authority and is approved by the Secretary of State to restrict children's liberty.

The home can accommodate up to 10 children who are aged between 10 and 17 years. At the time of this inspection, there were five children living at the home.

The home can provide care for up to five children placed by the Youth Custody Service and up to five children accommodated under Section 25 of the Children Act 1989 placed 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.

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. An interim manager is in post but has not applied to register with Ofsted. A new manager has been appointed but has yet to take up this post.

Inspection dates: 28 February and 2 March 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
Children's education and learning	good
Children's health	good
How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good

The secure children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 1 February 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

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

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Children enjoy positive relationships with staff. These relationships help children to feel safe and this supports their progress. However, shortfalls with regard to the protection of children and the leadership and management of the home mean that children's overall experiences are not consistently good.

The atmosphere in the home is welcoming and relaxed. Children enjoy spending time with staff, and these relationships are further supported by trauma-informed care practice. This approach helps children to manage their emotions, anxieties and frustrations. One child said, 'I was angry all the time, but I don't lose my temper now.' Children take part in a wide range of new and stimulating activities that help them to learn new skills and develop new interests and hobbies.

Staff work well with children's parents and carers and recognise how important these relationships are to the children. One mother said, 'Staff genuinely care about my son and really want the best for him.' Children are encouraged and supported to see their families when appropriate, and staff help children to repair their relationships when barriers exist. This provides improved life chances for children, giving them a family network that they can better rely on when they leave the home.

Children have individualised plans to help them prepare to leave the home and return to non-secure environments. Staff support these transitions well, and children's plans include authorised time away from the home, personalised staff support, and when appropriate, outreach work when the child is discharged. These plans help staff to work consistently with children and this reassures children that they are prepared for the future.

Children's views inform decisions about the running of the home. Staff provide meaningful opportunities for children to express their opinions and to raise any concerns. Although these are captured in the weekly 'community meeting' minutes, children are not routinely provided with these minutes or given a response to their requests.

Children's good behaviour is continually encouraged, and they respond well to the incentive scheme. The meaningful face-to-face key work and group work that children do with staff helps them to work through the reasons that brought them into this secure home. Records of this work are child-focused, and children are encouraged to contribute to and write their monthly reviews. This supports children to be involved in decisions about their care and their future.

Staff focus on supporting children to make progress in all areas of their lives. This includes improving their practical skills and self-care skills, recognising risks to their safety and developing their self-esteem and confidence. Staff use every opportunity to

build children's emotional resilience, and they speak with pride when they describe the progress children have made. The careful support children receive gives them the confidence to achieve the goals that are important to them.

Children's education and learning: good

The headteacher and teachers have a clear vision for the education they offer to children. The aim is to introduce children to positive learning experiences. Teachers are passionate about the subjects they teach and provide a rich and varied range of learning opportunities that successfully blend topics from the national curriculum. This helps children to re-engage with formal education. The learning environment is stimulating and well resourced, with relevant displays that are a mixture of teaching materials and children's work.

Teaching staff conduct a range of assessments that accurately identify children's educational needs. They appropriately implement the requirements of the education, health and care plans where necessary, and when plans are missing, they apply for them. This means that teachers are able to develop individual learning plans to ensure that children are able to make good progress.

Education staff know the children well and work in their best interests. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together. They encourage children to interact and stay focused during lessons. All children, with the help and support of their teachers, develop positive behaviours and attitudes that result in good attendance in education.

The vast majority of children value their education and enjoy their time in school. This helps them to make good progress from their starting points in all subjects. For example, in music, children develop performance, composition and recording skills, and in mathematics, children understand prime numbers and multiples and how these relate to other subjects, such as design technology.

Teaching staff use a variety of teaching strategies to build children's confidence. For example, when children are reluctant to write, teachers will initially do this for them, recording their verbal answers, and children benefit from lots of praise and encouragement. This demonstrates to children that all of their achievements are important and something to be proud of.

Education staff work well with care staff and other relevant professionals, including psychologists and speech and language therapists. They discuss, adapt and implement strategies to support children's learning. This helps children to improve their engagement in learning and develop their skills. Children understand what their options are for life after their time at the home. They understand the benefits of gaining functional and GCSE qualifications, and they are able to relate these to future career and job opportunities.

Teachers provide children with good quality, ongoing and appropriate feedback. The majority of feedback is verbal and provides lots of positive praise, explaining to

children what they have done well and where they can improve. Written feedback is simple and linked to one point: 'What the learner did well, and even better if...'

Children benefit from a well-constructed personal development curriculum that is designed to meet the current needs of the children living in the home. For example, children learn about the dangers of knife crime and about sexual health and what constitutes a healthy sexual relationship. These sessions are delivered when appropriate, in conjunction with teaching staff, care staff and health staff, to ensure that children get the same consistent message.

Leaders appoint staff who are qualified teachers and have a broad range of interests and backgrounds. This provides flexibility to teach a range of subjects. Staff attend a range of continuous professional development training, including targeted intervention for drug misuse and cognitive behaviour therapy. However, this training focuses on understanding children's behaviour rather than developing teachers' practice.

Education staff manage poor behaviour effectively. They correct poor language swiftly to ensure that it does not disrupt other children or the smooth flow of lessons. Children have the opportunity to earn merits and are rewarded for positive behaviours. This motivates them to stay focused during their lessons and to behave well.

The headteacher uses a variety of quality assurance processes effectively to monitor the quality of education and monitor children's progress. The headteacher produces a report, which he issues to the advisory board. This report highlights the subjects being taught, attendance and exam successes. The report is basic and does not indicate the individual successes of children well enough.

The teaching team is lacking focused leadership. The headteacher is currently covering as an assistant manager due to absences in the senior leadership team. This has resulted in staff not always receiving clear guidance, and some relevant information has not been shared as quickly as it should be. This has the potential to disrupt children's progress.

Children's health: good

Children benefit from easy access to a skilled and experienced team of healthcare staff. The healthcare staff work creatively to quickly build positive relationships with children. They know the children well and focus their practice on listening to children to improve their health outcomes. This approach helps children to feel comfortable when discussing their health needs.

The healthcare staff regularly refresh their mandatory training and benefit from reflective supervision sessions and appraisals. This ensures that they have the skills to meet children's needs. The monitoring of the healthcare service by leaders and managers is effective and ensures that any identified shortfalls are quickly addressed.

Children receive timely health assessments that determine their immediate and longer-term health needs. They benefit from quick access to primary health services, including

a dentist, an optician, smoking cessation services, immunisations and vaccinations. These healthcare services are further supported by two advanced nurse practitioners who are able to prescribe medication and provide sexual health and substance misuse advice and guidance.

Children have a communication profile formulated by the speech and language therapist. This profile helps healthcare staff and staff across the home to work with children effectively. This collaboration leads to consistent practice and innovative work that supports children's progress.

Children are routinely seen by a health professional following a physical restraint or after any incident of self-harm. This helps staff to identify any additional needs that children may have and ensures that they are well supported during difficult times that any immediate medical issues are attended to.

Children have plans that detail their emotional healthcare needs. These plans include children's contributions, often in their own words. Although the onsite psychologist has recently left, a new one has been appointed. This will mean that reflective practice sessions and trauma-informed work to support these plans, can again take place with the minimum disruption to children's progress.

Medication is administered as prescribed. When errors have occurred, they have been quickly investigated and appropriate action taken and there has been no impact on children's safety and well-being. However, the medication administration records folder contains the details of all children and is easily accessible to both staff and children during the administration of medication. This is potentially a breach of confidentiality. Furthermore, the administration of medication is not protected time, and on occasions, healthcare staff are interrupted by phone calls or other disruptions. This increases the risk that medication errors will occur.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Staff know each child's individual risks, vulnerabilities and triggers. They work closely with the children to identify individual strategies that will help them to become safer. This understanding by staff helps children to better manage their frustrations and make positive choices that help to keep them safe.

The use of physical restraint is appropriate. Managers closely monitor and review the use of this measure of control. Any learning points identified are discussed with staff, and children are encouraged to express their views about these incidents.

Single separation, where children are locked into an area alone to protect them or other children and staff from harm, is used appropriately in the home. During these episodes, staff verbally reassure children and regularly check on them to make sure that they are safe. This measure is only used for the shortest possible period and continually reviewed by managers to confirm that the criteria for use is met and that this response is proportionate to the incident.

There are occasions when children are 'managed away', meaning that they are kept apart from their peers but are with members of staff. This gives children the opportunity to reflect on their behaviours and repair relationships so that they can safely re-join their peer group. Records demonstrate why this measure has been used but do not include the details of which staff member has been with the child or how long they have spent with them. This limits the manager's oversight of the effectiveness of this measure.

The physical environment is checked regularly. At a monitoring visit in September 2022, a fire exit route in a maintenance area was obstructed. During this inspection, this fire exit route remained obstructed, preventing a clear pathway to leave the area in the event of fire. This does not ensure the safety of people working in this area.

Leaders and managers do not always ensure that all new staff are subject to the full range of required safer recruitment pre-employment checks, for example employment references. This means that managers are unable to confirm that all the staff working with the children are considered safe to do so. This requirement is repeated from the assurance inspection in July 2022.

The home only use 'pad and/or wand' searches. Children are only searched when there is information to suggest they may have something that could cause them or other people harm. Senior managers are consulted and endorse the decision to conduct the search, to ensure that it is appropriate and needed. These searches are carried out in a sensitive manner and ensure that children's dignity is preserved.

Any concerns about a child's well-being are promptly shared with external agencies so that effective action can be taken to ensure the child's safety. Records of these incidents are detailed and demonstrate that staff have diligently followed safeguarding and child protection referral processes. Feedback from external professionals is positive, especially about the transparency of practice in the home and the willingness of managers to share concerns and information. However, there have been some incidents, such as cannabis in the home, that Ofsted has not been notified of as required. This requirement is repeated from the last inspection.

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

A number of changes have occurred in the leadership team since the last inspection. These changes include the registered manager leaving the home in July 2022. Although it is acknowledged that the local authority has now recruited for this post, this has taken some considerable time. The new manager is due to commence employment in the coming weeks. However, the interim manager has not applied to register with Ofsted as required.

The current leadership team has retained a focus on children's day-to-day experiences and providing stability for children and staff during this period of change. As a consequence, other leadership responsibilities and tasks have not been completed. The

three requirements made at the assurance inspection in July 2022, with regard to the formal supervision of staff, the safer recruitment of staff and the notification of significant events to Ofsted, have not been addressed. Furthermore, the requirement made at the monitoring visit in September 2022 with regard to fire safety is also repeated. Although internal and external monitoring systems have identified these shortfalls, leaders and managers have not addressed these.

Staff benefit from and have access to a range of essential and more specialist training, including child trauma, foetal alcohol syndrome and autism. All new staff receive a thorough induction programme. This provides them with the knowledge and skills to meet the individual needs of the children in their care.

Good teamwork and communication are apparent in the home and are achieved through detailed daily shift handovers and regular staff meetings. The absence of formal reflective supervision sessions for all staff means that managers are unable to effectively monitor staff practice and performance to ensure that this consistently meets children's needs.

There is good partnership and collaborative working between leaders, managers, staff and other professionals and agencies. This is a considerable strength of the home. Managers recognise the importance of effective communication and positive professional relationships and understand how these support children's progress.

What does the children’s home need to do to improve? Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered persons 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 persons must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must—</p> <p>provide adequate means of escape from the home in the event of fire. (Regulation 25 (1)(b))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that fire escapes, and any designated evacuation routes, are clear of potential hazards and restrictions.</p> <p>This requirement was made at the monitoring visit in September 2022 and is restated.</p>	<p>10 April 2023</p>
<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> <p>This requirement was made at the assurance inspection in July 2022 and is restated.</p>	<p>28 May 2023</p>
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p>	<p>28 May 2023</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> <p>This requirement was made at the assurance inspection in July 2022 and is restated.</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>This requirement was made at the assurance inspection in July 2022 and is restated.</p>	<p>28 May 2023</p>
<p>Any person who carries on or manages an establishment or agency of any description without being registered under this part in respect of it (as an established or, as the case may be, agency of that description) shall be guilty of an offence. (Section 11(1) Care Standards Act 2000)</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that the person in day-to-day charge of the home registers with Ofsted.</p>	<p>10 April 2023</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>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))</p>	<p>28 May 2023</p>
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are consulted regularly on their views about the home’s care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. In particular, children should routinely have access to the children’s community meeting minutes and receive feedback on the decisions made about their requests and comments. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,’ page 22, paragraph 4.11)
- The registered person should ensure that children’s progress in education can be measured and evidenced in various ways. In particular, teachers should plan, track and monitor learners’ progress and set specific, focused and measurable targets to help children understand the rapid improvements they are making. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,’ page 26, paragraph 5.2)
- The registered person should ensure that the home makes available suitable facilities, equipment and resources for learning. In particular, ensure that the headteacher has the time to manage and support the teaching team effectively. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,’ page 29, paragraph 5.18)
- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). In particular, teacher staff should have more focused continual professional development to expand and further develop their teaching practice. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,’ page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should ensure that medicines are administered in line with an approved protocol. In particular, strengthen the administration process, to ensure all information is kept confidential, and that any interruptions during the administration of medicines are minimal. (Guide to

the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 35, paragraph 7.15)

- The registered person should ensure that a record is made and kept of all uses of single separation and managing away in secure children's homes (regulation 17 of The Children (Secure Accommodation) Regulations 1991). In particular, managing away records should be specific and include which staff are supporting the child and where the child is being managed away. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 50, paragraph 9.65)

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'.

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

Debbie Foster, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Paul Taylor, Social Care Inspector

Cath Sikakana, Social Care Inspector

Haley Lomas, His Majesty's Inspector, Further Education and Skills

Catherine Raycraft, Health and Justice Inspector, Care Quality Commission

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