

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 is registered to care for up to four children who may have social, emotional and learning difficulties.

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

The home has been without a registered manager since January 2021. A new manager was appointed in April 2023. They are in the process of submitting their application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 30 and 31 May 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **inadequate**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

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: 2 August 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
02/08/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
11/05/2022	Full	Inadequate
01/02/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
04/12/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Children say they are not happy living in the home. Group living dynamics are not well managed, and children say they do not always feel safe. Incidents of violence, aggression and bullying between children have had a negative impact on children's experiences.

Damage to the home has not been repaired in a timely manner. At the time of the inspection, some windows were boarded up, glass in a back door had shattered and a large hole outside a child's bedroom had sharp pieces of plaster remaining. Decorative items and furnishings had been removed from communal areas to prevent further damage by one child. The home was sparsely decorated and did not provide a warm and comfortable environment for children to live in.

Plans for children moving into the home are of poor quality. There is limited consideration of children's individual needs and vulnerabilities. Plans do not identify how children's needs can be safely met alongside the needs of other children already living in the home. Children had not been informed of plans for moving into the home. One child spoke about feeling unprepared for their move. Some adaptations have been made to the home to support one child's disability. However, the child's records do not include clear guidance for how staff can meet the child's additional needs.

Planned activities for children are often cancelled or postponed due to limited staffing when incidents arise. This impacts on the opportunities available to children to engage in enjoyable activities with staff.

Education is promoted for children living in the home. The use of mentors to support children's engagement in education is having a positive impact on children's attendance. For one child, this has meant a return to school when they did not previously attend.

Staff support children to spend time with their family. However, there is a lack of guidance for staff to ensure that they take appropriate action to safeguard children during this time.

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

Risks and relationships between children are not safely managed. There have been incidents of violent and aggressive behaviour between two of the children living in the home that have not been well responded to by staff. There are no plans in place for how staff manage these relationships, and records do not identify any concerns

about bullying in the home. Restorative work is not undertaken with children following incidents.

Significant shortfalls were identified around expectations for staff when children go missing from the home. Plans for staff to follow in the event of children going missing do not provide clear guidance. Staff do not consistently look for children, and there have been delays in staff reporting children when they are missing. It is practice in the home for staff to go to bed if children have not returned by the time their working shift ends. Children often return from incidents of being missing by taxi. While this is a council-approved service, one child told the inspector that these practices made them feel increasingly vulnerable and uncared for. Records do not include all information relating to the actions staff take during incidents. This limits management oversight of practice in the home.

Staff do not take appropriate action to support children in relation to known risks and vulnerabilities. Children's plans lack detail and do not provide clear strategies for staff to follow to meet children's needs or keep children safe.

Sufficient support has not been provided to one child to address their prolific substance use. There has been a deterioration in the child's mental health and an escalation of violent and aggressive behaviours in the home and in the community. Appropriate action has not been taken to address substance use within the home environment. There is evidence of one child using substances in the grounds. This is something that other children are aware of, and this impacts on the safety and well-being of all children living in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There has been a lack of consistent management and leadership in the home for a significant period of time. This has impacted on the quality of the care being provided to the children. A manager has recently been appointed and is starting to implement changes in the home.

Leaders and managers have identified shortfalls in relation to obtaining up-to-date local authority documentation for the children currently living in the home. However, at the time of the inspection, these documents had not been obtained. This means that staff do not have the information available to them to provide children with the level of care they may require.

Children are cared for by an established staff team. Although staffing levels have recently been increased due to an escalation of incidents, inadequate staffing has impacted on the care being provided to children and on the staff's ability to safeguard children during incidents.

Staff say there is a significant improvement in the home since the manager came into post. Supervision sessions and appraisals are now being undertaken. Staff say that morale in the home has improved and that they are starting to benefit from the manager's leadership and guidance.

Staff have not undertaken relevant training to meet all of the children's needs. The manager has taken some action to address this. However, there has been a significant delay in staff having the opportunity to access the training they require to fully support the children's individual needs.

Internal and external monitoring systems are not robust and do not provide effective oversight for leaders and managers. Incidents have not been reported to Ofsted in line with regulation. This limits the regulator's oversight of practice in the home. Independent visits to the home lack detail, and feedback from key stakeholders is not consistently obtained. Reports are of poor quality and do not provide assurance that children are effectively safeguarded in the home.

Following the inspection, a case review was held, and the decision was made to restrict the accommodation to prevent any more children from moving into the home.

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

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 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. 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;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and</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; and</p> <p>that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child’s health; and (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(b)(d))</p>	<p>17 July 2023</p>

<p>Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff take action to report and locate children when they are missing from home; that children’s records include clear guidance for staff to follow in the event of a child being missing from the home; that prompt action is taken to remove any hazards and repair any damage to the home; that children’s records include up-to-date and accurate information in respect of all known risks for children; and that staff take action to address children’s risks in the home arising from substance use and violent behaviour.</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 work as a team where appropriate;</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; and</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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person must ensure that there is managerial oversight of staff practice and the daily care being provided to children, that all staff have the relevant knowledge and skills to meet the needs of children living in</p>	<p>17 July 2023</p>

<p>the home and that internal and external monitoring systems provide effective scrutiny of practice in the home.</p>	
<p>The health and well-being standard is that—</p> <p>the health and well-being needs of children are met;</p> <p>children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and</p> <p>children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff help each child to—</p> <p>understand the child’s health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child’s health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child’s age and understanding; and</p> <p>understand and develop skills to promote the child’s well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(iv))</p> <p>Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that support is provided to children in respect of substance misuse issues.</p>	<p>17 July 2023</p>
<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> <p>that arrangements are in place to—</p> <p>ensure the effective induction of each child into the home;</p> <p>manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and</p> <p>that each child’s relevant plans are followed;</p>	<p>30 July 2023</p>

<p>that the child’s placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child’s relevant plans is requested, if—</p> <p>the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child’s needs. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(i)(ii)(c)(e)(i))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person must ensure that plans for children moving into the home include an assessment of how their needs can be met, that care is planned and provided to meet children’s identified needs and that action is taken to review the care provided to children when they cannot be safeguarded or when their needs cannot be met.</p>	
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans;</p> <p>help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;</p> <p>encourage each child to take responsibility for the child’s behaviour, in accordance with the child’s age and understanding;</p> <p>help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;</p> <p>communicate to each child expectations about the child’s behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child’s age and understanding;</p> <p>understand how children’s previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have</p>	<p>17 July 2023</p>

<p>the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children;</p> <p>de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children;</p> <p>understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and</p> <p>have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them; and</p> <p>that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(ix)(xi)(xii)(xiii)(b))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person must ensure that children are supported to develop positive relationships in the home; that group living dynamics are understood and appropriately responded to; that children are supported when there are incidents of bullying in the home and that staff implement clear boundaries and expectations to promote positive behaviour within the home.</p>	
<p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>protect and promote each child’s welfare;</p> <p>provide personalised care that meets each child’s needs, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans, taking account of the child’s background; and</p> <p>help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 6 (1) (2)(b)(ii)(iv)(v))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person must ensure that direct work is undertaken with children to address their personal and individual risks and needs.</p>	17 July 2023
<p>The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children’s home at least once each month.</p>	17 July 2023

<p>When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—</p> <p>if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and</p> <p>to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home’s records (except for a child’s case records, unless the child and the child’s placing authority consent) as the independent person requires.</p> <p>A visit by the independent person to the home may be unannounced.</p> <p>The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person’s report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person’s opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and</p> <p>the conduct of the home promotes children’s well-being. The independent person’s report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions.</p> <p>If the independent person becomes aware of a potential conflict of interest (whether under regulation 43(3) or otherwise) after a visit to the home, the independent person must include in the independent person’s report— details of the conflict of interest; and</p> <p>the reasons why the independent person did not notify the registered provider of the conflict of interest before the visit. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5) (6)(a)(b))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person must ensure that visits are undertaken monthly by an independent person, that the duration of the visits is sufficient to obtain thorough scrutiny of the home and that reports include feedback from children, staff and relatives.</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>	
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* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: Tammy Sutherland

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Claire Hobbs, Social Care Inspector

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