

1251073

Registered provider: Manchester City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is an adolescent support service provided by the local authority. It provides short stays for up to four children and emergency placements for one child at weekends and bank holidays. In addition, the service provides intensive, time-limited support to children on the edge of care. This includes planned day visits for children and outreach support for their families.

The manager registered with Ofsted in 2017.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 June 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 14 March 2023

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
14/03/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
22/02/2022	Full	Outstanding
06/02/2020	Full	Outstanding
14/11/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, nine children have received support in the home, accessing the crisis intervention bed. Those children who could return home to their family did so. Other children have been successfully supported into a new placement or into supporting living. Three of these children were identified as unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. No children were staying in the home at the time of this inspection.

A good-quality service is provided for children and their families. Staff provide effective intervention for families experiencing crisis in their lives. Staff help children and their families to stay together and work through their differences and resolve their problems over time.

Children benefit from the positive relationships that they share with staff. A social worker commented, 'Staff are sensitive and supportive. The support [name of child] received was great. Staff very quickly got to know him and found out what he was interested in and encouraged him to be part of the community.'

Staff successfully engage children, their families and external professionals to meet and agree the targets for children's plans. This approach ensures that children and their families receive the specific and targeted support that they require to strengthen and sustain positive and effective family relationships. It also ensures that children and their families feel appropriately included and involved in resolving those issues that have been of concern.

Children are frequently consulted and encouraged by staff to express their views and wishes. This equips staff to have a sound knowledge and understanding of the children they care for. Children feel respected, knowing that their views matter.

Parents greatly value the support the team can offer. One parent said, 'I wasn't coping and needed a lot of advice and reassurance. Staff were very helpful; they were always there at the end of the phone when I needed them.'

The staff team's commitment to promote and enhance children's positive family relationships is a real strength. Staff have a positive track record of keeping those children at risk of coming into care at home with their parents.

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

The home offers a safe and comfortable environment where children can be themselves and have fun and time out to safely explore family relationships and those issues that have become problematic in their lives.

Families benefit from practical support and guidance with their parenting. The combination of emergency stays for children and outreach work with children and

their families is effective in preventing some children coming into care and helping others to safely return to their families.

Staff have a good understanding of research-informed practice, which makes a difference to the lives and experiences of children. Staff are trained to undertake family group conferences to empower families to stay together. Conferences have been held for some of the children who have stayed in the home and helped to support their moves back to family.

There have been no physical interventions since the last inspection. The behaviours of children are managed safely and effectively by staff. Staff work consistently with children and they do not give up on them easily. However, debriefs with children and staff following incidents are not routinely taking place. This is a missed opportunity to help the child reflect after an incident, and to help the manager evaluate the incident and prevent any reoccurrence.

There have been two missing-from-home incidents since the last inspection. Staff take swift action to ensure that children who are missing from home return safely. Staff adhere to missing-from-home protocols by following children and encouraging them to return. Records are well maintained and reflect a proactive approach by staff to achieve the child's safe return to the home.

Children are well supervised and supported by staff, who prioritise their individual safety needs. Staff are provided with clear guidance on how to keep children safe.

The staff team works closely with the emergency duty team and visits families in crisis. It provides families with the support needed to successfully enable them to manage difficult situations without the need for their children to go into care. When necessary, children can stay overnight while appropriate longer-term plans are made for them.

Staff carry out direct work with children on staying safe. They refer them for specialist help, such as from substance use advisory services when the need arises. Because there is good partnership working with support services, children quickly receive offers of support. However, staff have not refreshed some of their training that would help them meet the needs of the children when support services may not be available.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager demonstrates strong and effective leadership that is child-focused. Leaders and managers are passionate about the service. They consistently strive to achieve the best outcomes possible for children and their families.

The registered manager encourages staff to engage in a reflective practice approach. Staff successfully engage with this approach and use opportunities in regular staff team meetings and handover meetings to share ideas and develop and refine strategies to optimise their success in working with children.

The staff team has established good and effective working relationships with police, education workers, the youth justice service and a myriad of other professionals whose aim is to support children's safety, welfare and development. This helps to ensure that children receive the best possible service from a range of dedicated professionals.

Full names of staff and working hours are not recorded on the rotas. This does not meet regulation and makes it difficult to review who is working in the home. In addition, the workforce plan does not include the detail required to meet regulation.

A real strength has been the flexibility of staff in adapting to meet the needs of the children requiring emergency support. Good multi-agency working ensures that children make progress and care planning is not allowed to drift.

Managers understand the home's strengths and areas for improvement. They have implemented systems to improve their oversight, through regular auditing and evaluation. This is improving practice in several areas and means that staff provide better care for children. The home has addressed and met the requirements made at the last inspection.

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, The 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>help each child to understand how to keep safe</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(ii)(vii))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person should ensure that debriefs take place following incidents. This will support children to be aware of and manage their own safety and will support learning from incidents for staff.</p>	30 July 2023
<p>The registered person must—</p> <p>maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a))</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that full staff names and actual hours worked are clearly recorded on rosters.</p>	30 July 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate resources to support their training needs, and that the training available meets the needs of the children who may be in their care, including substance misuse, online safety and ligature awareness. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce-related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should include details of the management and staffing structure,

the process and agreed timescales for staff to achieve induction and training, the process for managing and improving poor performance, and supervision. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

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: 1251073

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Manchester City Council

Registered provider address: Town Hall Extension, Albert Square, Manchester
M60 2LA

Responsible individual: Sean McKendrick

Registered manager: Valerie Jenkinson

Inspector

Jennifer Quest, Social Care Inspector

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