

SC039213

Registered provider:

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned home that provides care for up to six children aged 11 to 18 years who may experience social and emotional difficulties. Young people over 18 years old may remain in the home in some circumstances, based on their needs and risk assessment.

The home was registered with Ofsted in July 2003. The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2014.

There were five children living in the home at the time of this inspection.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 January 2024

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 31 January 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/01/2023	Full	Good
17/08/2021	Full	Good
20/12/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10/07/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are enabled to build positive relationships with staff. Staff show care, compassion and warmth towards children. Parents said that they are happy with the care provided and that their children settle and make good progress. Some children who have lived in the home have moved into semi-independent living.

Staff support children with their health needs. They ensure that children attend all routine and specialist health appointments. Staff advocate for children to receive appropriate healthcare and they support children to live a healthy lifestyle. For example, staff support children to eat healthily and they regularly cook nutritious meals together. Some children attend running groups in the local park. This helps to improve children's health and well-being.

Children enjoy a range of activities, both in the home and in the community. These include going to the cinema, the gym and the zoo, and staff also help children to attend their places of worship. Children benefit from having good routines and structure to their day.

Children's placement plans are comprehensive and detailed. These plans support the staff to understand children's past traumas and guide them on how to meet children's current needs. However, plans do not always demonstrate well how children's views have been obtained. In addition, one child's case records did not include important information from the placing authority, such as the child's care plan, most recent education plan and looked after review minutes, despite these being requested. This reduces the manager and staff's understanding of the children's needs.

The home's physical environment is safe for children. It is homely, clean, tidy, well maintained and well decorated. Children's bedrooms and communal spaces are well furnished, personalised and comfortable. There are no health and safety concerns.

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

The admissions process for new children moving into the home is not sufficiently robust. Leaders and managers carry out an assessment of risk from the information provided in the referral. The assessment considers the needs and behaviours of new children as well as those of children already living in the home. However, leaders and managers do not consider whether staff have the specific skills to meet children's needs, or whether there are risks in the local area that may impact on children. This limits the manager's ability to carry out a full assessment of a child's suitability to live in the home to prevent placement breakdown. Two children have had to leave the home after a short time as their needs could not be met.

In some instances, staff have not been successful at de-escalating challenging situations or behaviour. On some occasions, staff felt it was necessary to call the police to help manage incidents in the home. One incident required physical intervention but was not appropriately recorded as a restraint incident and staff did not check the well-being of the child after the incident. The manager's oversight of incidents is not sufficiently robust to identify any themes and shortfalls to provide opportunities for learning and improving staff practice.

The manager and staff work well with other professionals when children are missing from the home. The number of missing-from-home incidents has reduced. Staff maintain contact with children and relevant professionals. Children are helped to understand the risks on their return, through individual sessions. Feedback from the police and the independent return home interview workers is positive about how staff manage these situations and incidents. However, for one child, missing-from-home incident records are inconsistent and the timing of when staff contact the police varies when the child responds to staff's telephone calls.

Children are helped to understand risks through individual key-work sessions. They engage well with staff and talk about what is happening in their lives. Key-work sessions take place regularly and focus on children's individual needs and are in line with their plans. Children said that these sessions are beneficial to them.

Children said that they feel safe in the home. They can identify a trusted person to talk to if they have concerns. Children have good relationships with their key workers and are comfortable in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by a committed registered manager. The management team has been strengthened by the appointment of a deputy manager. Leaders, managers and staff know children well and have high aspirations for them. Children and parents are very positive about the support and understanding that leaders, managers and staff show to children.

Most professionals report good communication with the home. They said that staff are committed to supporting children and attend all significant meetings. Leaders and managers work proactively with other agencies and families and take on board feedback from stakeholders. However, one placing authority and school reported that relationships need to be strengthened and they need to be updated on incidents promptly.

Staff understand their roles and responsibilities and demonstrate appropriate safeguarding procedures. Team meetings demonstrate that staff are able to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children. Staff benefit from regular supervision, covering a broad agenda. Supervision sessions are reflective, offer staff support and guidance and consider the needs and progress of children. However, some supervision records do not demonstrate this well.

Staff interviewed said that they feel supported by the managers and equipped to fulfil their roles. New staff benefit from a detailed induction that helps them to understand their roles and responsibilities and is regularly reviewed by the managers. Staff are promptly enrolled on the appropriate qualification in residential childcare on completion of their probation.

Staff undertake a range of online and face-to-face training. They undertake more targeted training to meet the children's needs. Staff said that they find the sessions beneficial and they help to develop their practice.

The requirements and recommendations from the previous full inspection have been met. However, three new requirements are made regarding new referrals to the home, management oversight of incidents and restraint, and communication with placing authorities.

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>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>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>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)(vi))</p> <p>In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that all risks to children are thoroughly considered and assessed at the point of referral to ensure that they consider staff skills and training when admitting new children to the home.</p> <p>Leaders and managers must ensure that all incidents are promptly reviewed to assess staff skills and shortfalls. Managers must ensure that individual missing-from-home protocol is clear about the timing of when staff can report children as missing when children remain in contact with staff while away from the home.</p>	29 February 2024
The registered person must ensure that—	29 February 2024

<p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>the name of the child;</p> <p>details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;</p> <p>the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;</p> <p>the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;</p> <p>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and</p> <p>a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;</p> <p>within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.</p> <p>(Regulation 35 (3)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p> <p>In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that all incidents requiring physical intervention are clearly recorded, including the measure used and duration.</p>	
<p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which—</p>	<p>28 March 2024</p>

include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child;

are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b))

In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that they have the relevant care plans for children from the placing authorities.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff supervision and performance management are child-focused. Supervision records should demonstrate that staff reflect on children's experiences. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure that staff help children to participate in their care planning and that children's views and wishes are clear in their care plans. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)
- The registered person should work in close partnership with the children's support network. In particular, the registered person should ensure that they maintain effective communication with placing authorities and take actions to escalate concerns where they consider responses to be inadequate. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 11, paragraph 2.5)

Information about this inspection

Inspector has 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: SC039213

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address:

Responsible individual: Stellakis Miltiadous

Registered manager: Abubakarr Sesay

Inspector

Dorothy Thompstone, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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