

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 home provides care for up to four children who may experience social and/or emotional and learning difficulties.

Four children were living at the home at the time of this inspection. The inspector spoke to three of the children about their experiences of living in the home.

An interim manager has been in post since May 2024. She has submitted her application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 July 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be 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 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: 30 April 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/04/2024	Full	Inadequate
22/08/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
30/05/2023	Full	Inadequate
02/08/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

The children have all lived in the home since before the last inspection. They say they are happy and like living in the home. Children are supported to develop positive relationships with staff, who have a good understanding of their needs. Staff support children to feel settled in the home.

Staff value children and speak about them warmly. Children are listened to, and their views help to inform the care they receive. Children have been involved in choosing the decor and furnishings for the home. They also requested bicycles, which have now been purchased. This helps children to feel listened to and heard.

Key conversations between children and staff help children to discuss issues that are important to them and support them to talk about difficult issues that need addressing, such as vaping and substance use.

Children are supported to attend school. One child has struggled to maintain a school placement, and staff are providing support around this. However, there are no clear routines in place to support the child with a successful future return to a learning environment. This limits the child's opportunities to reach their educational potential.

Door alarms continue to be used on children's bedroom doors to alert staff when children leave their bedrooms at night. The risk plan for one child details the reason why the alarm needs to be used, however, this is not routinely reviewed and there is no permission in place from the child's social worker. This limits children's privacy and movement in the home.

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

Children say they feel safe. The consistent care provided by the staff team helps them to feel secure in their home.

Staff understand the risks for children well and children's risk management plans are now more detailed. There has been a marked improvement in risk plans and they are written to address children's individual concerns and vulnerabilities. The plans provide clear strategies for staff to follow to reduce risks for children.

Staff understand the missing-from-home procedures well and there are detailed plans in place to help direct staff in their responses to children. However, the plan for one child lacks clarity. Expectations on staff to search for children when they are missing are unclear and there is an over-reliance on using taxis or staff's personal vehicles when

searching for children. Agency staff are unable to use their personal vehicles to do this and therefore searches can be limited.

The number of times children have needed to be held to keep everyone safe has reduced significantly. Increased staffing in the home has allowed staff to take time to understand the triggers for children's behaviours. Records of physical intervention are clear and reflect that the holds are proportionate. Debriefs for staff and children are undertaken, but it is not always clear who has carried them out.

Children's case records are not fully up to date and some children's statutory documents are missing. Escalation processes to obtain documents have not been followed. This prevents staff from being able to support children in line with their plans.

Safe recruitment procedures are in place. However, there are some discrepancies in the paperwork and the manager does not have all the information required to assure her of the suitability of staff.

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

The home is managed by a suitably experienced and qualified interim manager. She has brought some stability and consistency to the home and is committed to improving outcomes for children.

Social workers and parents say they are happy with the care being provided to children. One social worker said it is the most stable and consistent home their child has experienced.

The quality and frequency of supervision have improved since the last inspection. The manager and senior staff ensure that staff are provided with opportunities to reflect on their practice and the progress children are making.

All staff have completed their mandatory training and additional training relevant to children's plans. This investment in development means they are able to meet children's needs.

Recording shortfalls identified at the last inspection have not been fully addressed. Several records are not legible and have not been signed by staff. This means there is a lack of information about children's experiences and limited management oversight of incidents in the home.

Several key documents such as the quality of care review, statement of purpose, workforce development plan and fire risk assessment are either out of date or have not been completed. The quality of care review lacks depth and does not evaluate the difference the service is making for children. It does not include the voice of children or wider stakeholders such as parents, staff or placing authority social workers. This limits oversight of practice in the home and does not support service development.

Monthly visits are carried out by the independent person to provide external scrutiny of the home. However, a recent conflict of interest between the current independent person and the local authority has not been addressed. This reduces independent oversight of practice in 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(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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</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 achieve the child’s education and training targets, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans;</p> <p>support each child’s learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study;</p> <p>understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;</p> <p>help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment;</p> <p>promote opportunities for each child to learn informally;</p> <p>maintain regular contact with each child’s education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child’s education and training and to maximise the child’s achievement;</p> <p>raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child’s education or training provider and the child’s placing authority;</p> <p>help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of</p>	<p>3 October 2024</p>

<p>exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible;</p> <p>help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment;</p> <p>help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans; and</p> <p>that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)(b))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that children's daily routines encourage and promote their engagement in education.</p>	
<p>The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if—</p> <p>the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children;</p> <p>the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(d))</p> <p>Leaders and managers must ensure the use of surveillance is regularly reviewed in the home for all children. Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that systems in place are fit for purpose and that the home does not operate a blanket approach for all children.</p> <p>This was a requirement at the last inspection and has been restated.</p>	3 October 2024
<p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which—</p> <p>include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child;</p> <p>are kept up to date; and</p> <p>are signed and dated by the author of each entry.</p>	3 October 2024

<p>(Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))</p> <p>Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that all children have up-to-date plans and that each child's records are completed and maintained to a good standard, are legible and signed by the author.</p> <p>This was a requirement at the last inspection and has been restated.</p>	
<p>If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home—</p> <p>the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that they complete an up-to-date fire risk assessment aligned with their own procedures.</p>	3 October 2024
<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, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>the individual is of integrity and good character;</p> <p>the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;</p> <p>the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and</p>	3 October 2024

<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)(a)(b)(c)(d))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that they have all up-to-date information relating to new staff, including exploring gaps in employment.</p>	
<p>The registered provider must appoint, at the registered provider's expense, a person ("the independent person") to visit and report on the children's home carried on by the registered provider.</p> <p>The independent person must declare any actual or potential conflict of interest (whether of the type mentioned in paragraph (3) or otherwise) to the registered provider without delay and, if reasonably practicable, before conducting a visit to the home.</p> <p>If the registered provider becomes aware of a potential conflict of interest in relation to the independent person before or during the independent person visiting the home (see regulation 44), the registered provider must—</p> <p>make arrangements to cancel the visit without delay; and</p> <p>appoint a different independent person to visit the home. (Regulation 43 (1) (6) (7)(a)(b))</p>	<p>3 September 2024</p>
<p>The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months.</p> <p>In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p> <p>the quality of care provided for children;</p> <p>the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and</p> <p>any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.</p> <p>After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review</p>	<p>3 October 2024</p>

<p>and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report").</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and</p> <p>make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home.</p> <p>The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5))</p>	
<p>The registered person must—</p> <p>keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and</p> <p>notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))</p>	3 October 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce-related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1. ('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: 1263766

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

Registered provider address: Tameside One, Market Place, Ashton-under-Lyne OL6 6BH

Responsible individual: Rebekah Pearson

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Colin Jones, Social Care Inspector

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