

# 1273485

Registered provider: Birmingham Children's Trust Community Interest Company

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is operated by Birmingham Children's Trust and provides short breaks for up to seven children with learning disabilities.

The post for a registered manager has been vacant since 31 March 2023. A new manager has been appointed and has applied to register with Ofsted.

### Inspection dates: 9 and 10 October 2023

|                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b> | <b>good</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                                             |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | 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:** 17 August 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement   |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 17/08/2022      | Full            | Good                   |
| 07/09/2021      | Full            | Good                   |
| 27/01/2020      | Full            | Good                   |
| 14/02/2019      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness |

## **Inspection judgements**

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Eighteen children benefit from short-break stays at the home. The frequency of stays is different for each child depending on their needs.

The staff are passionate about the care they provide to the children. They know the children very well and have a good understanding of their needs. Staff use their knowledge, skills and experience to meet children's needs in a nurturing manner. This helps children to feel safe and reassured.

The manager and staff have worked hard to create a welcoming home for the children. The children's bedrooms are individually themed. For example, one bedroom has a space theme. Another has a superhero theme. When the children come to stay, they are given the opportunity to choose their bedroom. This helps the children to feel involved and supports a sense of belonging.

Children's introductions into the home are well thought out and take account of the child's needs. Before a child starts having short breaks, staff meet with the child's parents and social worker to ensure that they have a good understanding of the child's individual needs. The child is then invited to visit the home and meet the staff before they have their first overnight stay. Thoughtful and child-focused planning helps children to settle in well.

The staff make sure that children with complex communication needs can communicate in their preferred way. This enables children to express their choices and views, which helps them to feel included and empowered.

The children enjoy their time at the home and take part in a variety of activities that promote their social and emotional development. Activities take place inside and outside of the home and include arts and crafts, water play and trips to the local park and swimming baths. Staff work hard to ensure that the activities are enjoyable. The inspector observed the children and staff enjoying quality time together.

Parents speak highly of the care and support provided to their children. One parent said that the home has been a 'lifeline' for her and her child. Another parent described the home as 'brilliant' and the staff as 'loving' towards their child.

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

Safeguarding practice by staff is good. The staff know the children extremely well and have a good understanding of their risks and how to manage them. The children's plans are well written and provide up-to-date information for staff about the children and their individual needs. This ensures that staff have clear guidance about how to support children and reduce risk.

Since the last inspection, there have been no concerns raised about staff practice and there have been no complaints. Furthermore, there have been no incidents of children going missing from the home. The staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in protecting children and keeping them safe from harm.

Managers make sure that children are matched together according to their needs, risks and behaviour. Staff attend planning meetings with social workers and parents to ensure that all relevant information is shared. As a result, children's safety and welfare are promoted as they experience their short breaks with children who have similar needs to themselves.

Since the last inspection, there have been three medication errors. These errors have not impacted the overall health needs of the children. However, the manager has taken proactive steps to prevent further reoccurrence. For example, the manager has ensured that medication is stored safely. Staff are appropriately trained in the administration of medication, and the manager carries out annual assessments to test staff's competency. The manager also carries out a monthly audit of the medication processes to help identify and address any practice issues or errors. This has helped to ensure that there have been no further medication errors.

Staff only use physical restraint when it is necessary to protect a child or others from harm. Since the last inspection, there has been one situation when a child has been held by staff. Staff were trained in the use of the measure. However, the child was not helped to express their views after they had been held. This was a missed opportunity to understand the child's views and how to reduce the likelihood of any further incidents.

Managers ensure that adults who work in the home are safely recruited before they work with children. This helps to keep children safe.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

Since the last inspection, the registered manager has retired. The deputy manager has been appointed to the manager role and has applied to register with Ofsted. The new manager is child focused and keeps children central to her planning for the development of the home. The manager is supported by a capable deputy manager.

The home is staffed by a stable and consistent staff team. Over the summer period, agency staff were used to cover staff shortages. This was well managed, and permanent and agency staff worked in harmony to ensure that consistent care was provided to the children.

The manager has good oversight of the home. Her use of monitoring systems is effective. Consequently, she has a good understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development. She addresses shortfalls in a timely way, which helps to ensure that children are safe and have the support they need.

Staff are provided with regular reflective professional supervision that helps them to identify their strengths and any further training they may need. Regular team meetings allow staff the opportunity to discuss practice and children's progress.

Staff receive training that equips them with the knowledge that they need to meet children's individual needs. For example, staff have received specific training around epilepsy. Most staff hold the required qualification for their role. Those who do not are working towards the qualification within the required time frame.

Partnership working and good communication with other professionals are strengths of this home. Social workers are complimentary about staff communication and feel that the home has a positive impact on children's progress. For example, one social worker told the inspector that the home has been fantastic for a child and their family. Another social worker told the inspector that their child is being provided with new and positive experiences.

The manager has a workforce development plan in place. However, she has not ensured that the plan is updated to reflect staff's training needs. This administrative shortfall has not affected children's care or safety.

## **What does the children's home need to do to improve?**

### **Recommendations**

- The registered person should ensure that any child who has been restrained is given the opportunity express their feelings about their experience of the restraint as soon as is practicable, ideally within 24 hours of the restraint incident. The age of the child and the circumstances of the restraint should be considered. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.60)
- The registered person should have a workforce development plan and ensure that it is updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home. The plan should be used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of staff, including the home's manager. ('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:** 1273485

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Birmingham Children's Trust Community Interest Company

**Registered provider address:** Birmingham Children's Trust, Third Floor Zone 16,  
1 Lancaster Circus, Birmingham B4 7DJ

**Responsible individual:** Melanie Page

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Lydia Isaac, Social Care Inspector

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