

# 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

This home is a short-break service for seven children who may have learning disabilities.

The registered manager has extensive experience and knowledge.

### Inspection dates: 17 and 18 August 2022

|                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <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:** 7 September 2021

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement   |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 07/09/2021      | Full            | Good                   |
| 27/01/2020      | Full            | Good                   |
| 14/02/2019      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness |
| 05/09/2018      | Full            | Good                   |

## Inspection judgements

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

Children make good progress as a direct result of the short breaks they have at this home. Staff support children coming into the home to feel welcome and comfortable. The manager ensures that the matching of new children into the home is done effectively.

Many staff have extensive experience and have worked at the home for several years. As a result, staff know children's areas of strength and need. They treat children with respect and dignity, and give them individualised care which meets all their daily needs. Staff are nurturing and patient, and have developed positive relationships with children.

Children benefit from a range of activities that enhance their social experiences and offer them new opportunities. Staff make sure that children's experiences are full of fun. These include activities in the home, such as arts and crafts, going out into the community to the cinema and day trips. Recently, a group of children attended the Commonwealth Games.

Many children using the service have significant communication difficulties. The staff use a variety of methods to maximise the opportunities for children to express choices and share their views. This creates a child-focused and inclusive culture where the needs and experiences of children shape and influence the care that they receive.

Staff work hard to maintain positive relationships with family members in preparation for each child's visit to the home. This good communication supports stability for children, ensuring that, where possible, established routines can continue.

Parents spoke highly of the service and gave many examples to the inspector of how the support provided to them and their children had made a positive impact on their families. One parent shared how the short breaks had really supported positive progress for their son. They described the service as 'a lifeline' to the family.

The home is well equipped and maintained. There are a wide range of games, toys and activities on offer at the home. These include an outdoor play area and a sensory room. This provides a fun and interactive experience for children to enjoy. The children's bedrooms are clean and well maintained.

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

The registered manager and staff promote the safety and well-being of children. Staff know the children well, and this helps to keep them safe from harm. Staff identify risks to children and follow safeguarding procedures effectively. Incidents of concern are clearly recorded, and managers take effective action.

Staff focus on promoting positive behaviour. They communicate with each child in a way that matches their understanding and ability. Physical interventions are only used as a last resort, and records are thoroughly completed in line with the organisation's policy and procedure.

Children do not go missing from the home. Staff recognise that the children are extremely vulnerable and require high levels of supervision to stay safe in the home and the wider community.

The registered manager has effective systems in place to monitor safeguarding practice and to ensure that the physical environment is safe and secure. Staff have a good knowledge of fire safety and ensure that fire drills take place on a regular basis. When children struggle to understand the importance of fire drills, staff are responsive to individual needs. Staff are creative in supporting children through key work and developing personal evacuation plans. This increases the safety of children.

When children are prescribed medication, there are effective systems in place to ensure that the administering of this is safe for children.

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

The registered manager has vast experience in residential childcare and uses her extensive knowledge to oversee children's day-to-day care. She has a good understanding of the home's strengths and areas of development.

The manager works hard to retain staff. A qualified and experienced staff team supports the manager. Staff receive regular supervision which considers children's progress as well as staff well-being. Managers provide debriefs for staff after challenging incidents. Regular team meetings provide a forum for staff and managers to consider how practice can be improved.

Staff have access to a comprehensive training programme. This supports staff to continuously develop their skills and knowledge. There is a system in place to check when staff training expires. However, the monitoring and review of training have not effectively ensured that all staff members are up to date with their training.

Social workers have very positive views about staff. One social worker said, '[Name of foster carer] supports children's progress well. Staff are proactive in implementing plans to support children to learn new skills and promote independence.'

Safe recruitment processes are followed when new staff are recruited. This provides assurance that staff are suitably vetted prior to them caring for the children. Some staff members have been employed solely at the home for a period of more than 20 years. The inspector found that for two long-standing members of staff, recruitment records did not sufficiently evidence that the manager had assured herself that their recruitment was suitable through an assessment of risk.

The registered manager works closely with the independent visitor to address any identified shortfalls to improve the quality of care for children.

## 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, 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 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>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications, and skills to meet the needs of each child.<br/>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that all staff are adequately trained.</p> | <p>16 September 2022</p> |

### Recommendation

- The registered person should be responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations', including the quality standards, page 61, paragraph 13.1)

### 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:** Third Floor Zone 16, 1 Lancaster Circus,  
Birmingham B4 7DJ

**Responsible individual:** Melanie Page

**Registered manager:** Nicola Larkin

## Inspector

Lisa Walsh, Her Majesty's Inspector Social Care

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