

2490938

Registered provider: London Borough of Hillingdon

Assurance 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 experience social and emotional difficulties. The home's statement of purpose states that it aims to meet the needs of children that Hillingdon are responsible for. Most referrals to the service are for children in crisis, who are suffering long-term placement breakdown, often due to behaviours which their current placement is struggling to manage and have served notice. The home is registered to provide care for up to five children, but currently accepts up to four children following a review of the statement of purpose.

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

The home registered with Ofsted in August 2018. The post for a registered manager has been vacant since April 2019.

Inspection date: 14 December 2022

Date of last inspection: 17 August 2022

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspectors evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The care of children

Children develop meaningful relationships with staff, who they feel they can talk to about important things in their lives. For example, one child reported a good relationship with the staff and said that staff genuinely care about the children in this home. As a result, some children are settled and enjoy positive experiences with those caring for them.

Children are able to stay in touch with their families, friends and other people who play a significant role in their lives. Each child's views and wishes regarding the nature and extent of time spent with people who are important to them are respected, and plans are put in place to make this safe and meaningful. This bespoke support has resulted in one child's missing-from-home incidents reducing.

The physical, emotional and health needs of each child are identified, and appropriate action is taken to make sure that children receive the support that they need. Staff work closely with social workers, mental health professionals and schools. One child's medication records have not been signed to show that they had refused to take their medication.

Children are encouraged to express their views and feelings and be part of their own care planning. However, children do not regularly attend house meetings and their records, including individual care plans, do not demonstrate their contributions. This does not support children to develop a sense of ownership of their lives to help them to make good progress.

The safety of children

Staff are alert to risk and know the children's vulnerabilities well. They work with other professionals, including social workers and the police, to discuss potential risks and safety plans. However, risk assessments are not regularly updated and not all known risks and professional discussions are recorded on the children's files. In addition, follow-up actions following incidents are not always recorded. This limits staff's understanding of what is happening to reduce risk.

Incidents of children going missing from the home have reduced. Staff are proactive and maintain contact with the relevant professionals and look for children in the local area. Incidents are reviewed; however, staff debriefs do not always take place and risk assessments are not always updated for some children. Independent return home interviews are not always carried out. This is a missed opportunity to gather important information to manage and reduce risks.

Children are supported to understand the risks they face. However, children's care plans do not always include information about children's history. In addition, key-work sessions do not consistently explore children's individual risks. Children's records do not consistently reflect staff's creative attempts to engage children. This is a missed opportunity to help children to learn how to keep themselves safe.

The home's physical environment is safe for children. However, leaders and managers have failed to ensure that repair work in the home is carried out promptly. This does not provide a homely and welcoming environment for children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

Shortfalls in leadership and management continue. The provider has failed to secure stability in the leadership and management of the home. The lack of a registered manager for the home has created a leadership gap, which has contributed to low staff morale and gaps in record-keeping.

Two of the three requirements raised at the last inspection have been satisfactorily addressed. Improvements have been made in the home's missing-from-home protocols and staff work with other agencies to reduce risks. For example, staff have worked well with the social worker and the mother of one child to ensure that appropriate risk assessments are in place and that family time is safe.

Some staff say that they do not feel supported well by leaders and managers, particularly following incidents of challenging behaviour. Staff feel that the high level of incidents has contributed to the high staff sickness levels. Some staff are not clear about the responses required to manage children's complex and challenging needs. This means that children are not always given the consistent support and care that they require.

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.

The provider supports all staff to gain the level 3 diploma in residential childcare. Although staff receive a range of training to inform their practice, there are some gaps in staff's mandatory training. In addition, not all staff have completed additional training to meet children's specific needs, such as trauma-informed practice.

Leaders and managers do not have effective monitoring systems in place to review the quality of care provided to children and identify key themes due to the inconsistency in the quality of records. In addition, the reports from the independent person are consistently provided late. Furthermore, the reports do not explicitly state whether children are safeguarded effectively and if the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. This compromises management oversight.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/08/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
15/02/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
15/09/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
10/12/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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, 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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— 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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and that the homes day to day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(b)) This relates specifically to ensuring that children's known risks are recorded, risk assessments for children are updated when new risks are identified, and children are helped to understand identified risks through individual sessions. In addition, the registered person must ensure that children are supported through clear behaviour support plans to manage their behaviour.	30 January 2023

The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; understand the impact and the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(e)(f)(h)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that staff are suitably trained and that there are effective monitoring systems in place to review the quality of care provided to children and take action to address any shortfalls identified.	30 January 2023
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that children's backgrounds are included and considered in their care plans.	30 January 2023
*The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and	30 January 2023

the registered provider— is an organisation or a partnership; does not satisfy regulation 28; or is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home. If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of— the name of the person so appointed; and the date on which the appointment takes effect. (Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii) (2)(a)(b)) This relates specifically to the appointment and Ofsted registration of a manager This requirement is restated from last inspection.	
--	--

* This requirement is subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that, for the home to be a nurturing and supportive environment, they continue to repair all areas of the home's interior. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should keep records of the administration of all medication, which includes occasions when prescribed medication is refused. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Key-work session records should consistently reflect the creative attempts staff have taken to engage children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing or away from home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. The registered person should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in

place to protect each child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

- The registered person should ensure that staff receive supervision of their practice from a suitable professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. In particular, the registered person should ensure that staff supervision records reflect the needs and progress of children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person makes a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2490938

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: London Borough of Hillingdon

Registered provider address: London Borough of Hillingdon, Civic Centre, High Street, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 1UW

Responsible individual: Jan Major

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Dorothy Thompstone, Social Care Regulatory Inspector
Russel Breyer, His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

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

© Crown copyright 2022