

2490938

Registered provider: London Borough of Hillingdon

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The London Borough of Hillingdon operates the home. The home provides care for up to five children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The home has not had a registered manager in post since 30 April 2019.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 10 February 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 September 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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: 10 December 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/12/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
28/08/2019	Full	Good
12/03/2019	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
03/12/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

Children's experiences, progress and outcomes are varied. One child moved into the home despite the child's risk matching and impact assessment stating that the placement was not suitable. This had a negative impact on the experience and progress of one child already living in the home.

Children's learning progress and educational attainments are not consistently good. Although staff are ambitious for children and support and encourage them to attend and do well in their education, not all children are in education. One child informed the inspector that she would like to attend mainstream school. The interim manager and staff are working with social care and education professionals to achieve this.

Key-work sessions with children do not always link children's outcomes with the placing local authority's care plans. Children's plans and outcomes from statutory reviews are not accessible in children's files. This prevents staff from supporting children to meet their care plans and agreed outcomes effectively.

The interim manager has identified shortfalls in supporting children to develop their independence according to their individual needs, such as budgeting, shopping and cooking. The interim manager has highlighted the issue of the local authority commissioning a delivery service for food and other items for children as this limits children's learning opportunities in relation to budgeting and shopping.

Feedback from a child's family member and key professionals is very positive, praising staff for their dedicated work. One professional commented on staff's positive impact on one child's progress and how the child feels listened to and cared for.

Staff support children to take pride in who they are, which helps them to develop a positive identity. Children are supported in their religious traditions, such as praying and eating halal meat. One parent said, 'My child's identity needs are met; staff are diverse and multicultural. This is the first home where my child feels settled and happy.'

The interim manager and staff take steps to ensure that children's risk assessments and plans are reviewed and updated regularly. Action is taken to challenge placing local authorities effectively when the interim manager is concerned that the placing authority is not making decisions that are in children's best interests, or when they do not meet children's needs.

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

Risk assessments address any known vulnerabilities for children effectively and set out what action should be taken to address the risks. However, recent impact assessments have not been appropriately considered when decisions have been made for emergency placements. This has had a destabilising impact on one child already living in the home.

Some agency staff are not trained in dealing with challenging behaviour. Recent incidents have left some agency staff and children vulnerable. The interim manager is aware of this shortfall and has made the leaders aware of the lack of appropriate training for agency staff and the staff shortage.

Records of all incidents are kept at the home. However, the views of the children following incidents are not always sought or recorded. This prevents children, staff, leaders and managers from reflecting and learning from incidents effectively.

Staff understand and respond to the risks for children relating to episodes of going missing from home, exploitation and self-harm. One child told the inspector that staff helped her to keep safe and, as a result, she now has a reduced level of supervision and more freedom.

Children can identify a trusted adult they can talk to if they have any worries or concerns. They know how to raise concerns and talk to staff or police when they are worried. Staff listen to the children, take their concerns seriously and respond appropriately.

Staff have completed safeguarding training and know how to respond to safeguarding concerns. When concerns arise, these are shared with key professionals. This ensures that children are safeguarded effectively. The designated officer told the inspector that the home deals with allegations appropriately.

All room searches are carried out and recorded appropriately. This helps to remove harmful objects and prevents children from further self-harming.

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

Leaders have failed to address some of the requirements from the previous inspection. The home has not had a registered manager in post since 30 April 2019. Following the resignation of the interim manager, leaders are now in the process of recruiting a registered manager.

Leaders have not ensured that the physical environment of the home is maintained to a high standard and that the home feels and looks like a family home for children. The gaming room is out of use due to damage from a leak. Refurbishment has not

been completed in a timely way. The interim manager is taking action to address the outstanding refurbishment.

Management monitoring and oversight require improvement. Quality assurance reports have not always included feedback from children, families, staff or professionals.

Some staff do not feel supported by senior leaders. Senior staff members and the interim manager informed the inspector that impact assessments and decisions in relation to emergency placements have been ignored by leaders. Consequently, inappropriate placements have resulted in frequent incidents at the home.

However, staff reported that they feel supported by the interim manager. They receive regular and good-quality supervision. However, the quality of supervision records is varied. Staff stated that they need more training to meet the complex mental health needs of the children in their care.

The interim manager and staff work proactively and positively with other agencies and professionals. They seek to build effective working relationships with parents and professionals to secure positive outcomes 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(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 registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and 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 registration of a manager.	28 October 2021
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—	28 October 2021

understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; protect and promote each child's welfare; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iv)(vii)(c)(i)(ii)) This particularly refers to managers ensuring that impact assessment is used to make appropriate decisions about emergency placements, the home's admission policy is adhered to as set out in the home's statement of purpose, and repairs and refurbishment of the home are completed in a timely manner.	
The registered person must ensure that the employment of any person on a temporary basis at the children's home does not prevent children from receiving such continuity of care as is reasonable to meet their needs. (Regulation 31 (1)) This particularly refers to managers ensuring that staff are trained appropriately to meet the complex needs of children.	28 October 2021
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which	28 October 2021

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). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and 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)) This relates specifically to the managers being fully satisfied that all staff, including agency and temporary staff, are suitable prior to working with children.	
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must ensure that— 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. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (3)(c)) This specifically relates to the managers ensuring that children are offered a debrief following the incidents.	28 October 2021
When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (2)(a))	28 October 2021

This specifically relates to the managers ensuring that the feedback from children, their parents, relatives and staff working at the home are captured in the independent visitor's report.	
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. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. 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) (5))	28 October 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the case files contain up-to-date education, health and care plans from the placing authority. This will inform care planning, key-work sessions and outcomes for the children concerned. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.5)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs. In particular, they should ensure that staff receive appropriate training in relation to mental health and managing violent behaviour, and that the senior staff receive reflective supervision training. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

- The registered person should ensure that emergency admissions should not be taken unless the home's statement of purpose and its capacity and support systems mean that it has the capability to care for children admitted at very short notice, while continuing to offer high-quality care to children already living in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.6)
- The registered person should ensure that the design of the home should, where appropriate, enable children to develop independence skills within the supportive environment of the home. In particular, they should ensure that children are supported to learn budgeting, shopping and cooking. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.25)
- The registered person should ensure that they act as an effective advocate for or on behalf of a child who may be experiencing difficulties in attending education. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.12)

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: 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: Tony Zaman

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Gulcin Ardic, Social Care Inspector

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