

# 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's statement of purpose states that it aims to meet the needs of young people that Hillingdon are responsible for. Most referrals to the service are for young people 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 provides care for up to 4 children.

The registered manager post has been vacant since April 2019, despite robust attempts to recruit a suitable individual to the role.

### Inspection dates: 17 and 18 August 2022

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| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>requires improvement to be good</b> |
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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:** 15 February 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** sustained effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 15/02/2022      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness         |
| 15/09/2021      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 10/12/2019      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness         |
| 28/08/2019      | Full            | Good                            |

## Inspection judgements

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

Managers and staff understand that children do not find it easy to trust adults due to their poor early childhood experiences. Children's progress is therefore varied and attempts to engage with children are not consistently recorded by staff.

Managers and staff encourage children to attend home meetings to discuss day to day matters of concern to them and children can also raise issues directly with the manager and staff at any time. Children are encouraged and supported to attend statutory meetings where more significant decisions are made about them. One child reported that they felt that staff really listened to them and acted on their views, where possible.

Managers and staff strive to engage children in education and promote the importance of educational attainment. Where children refuse to attend school, are excluded, or have been out of formal education for some time, alternative education provision is offered. Although children have not engaged in any form of education more recently, the two children currently living in the home have secured school places for the coming academic year. One child will be starting police cadets soon.

Children are offered a range of activities in the home and the community. A 'community engagement' worker has been commissioned to work with one child to encourage the child to get involved in activities outside the home. Individual activity planners are drawn up with children to engage them in activities with staff, such as trips shopping and to the cinema. However, children generally choose to participate in activities outside the home with their peers and family.

Children are supported to develop their independent life skills according to their ability. For some children this means being able to attend to their personal hygiene and keep their personal living space clean and tidy. One child has recently moved on from the home to semi-independent living. However, managers are aware that the home's independent living programme needs to be refined as currently it does not focus enough on key areas such as budgeting or paying bills.

Children's health and well-being needs are supported well. Children are encouraged to see their health as a priority, attend health appointments and have a healthy diet. Medication risk assessments are in place to manage the administration of children's medication. Managers and staff seek prompt professional medical advice and attention when required to manage children's health needs. Children's emotional well-being needs are monitored and supported well when there is a risk of self-harm.

Clear and consistent boundaries help children to manage their behaviour and regulate their emotions. However, when children struggle to maintain the boundaries, it is not always clear what work has been done to address this.

Managers and staff work effectively with professionals to ensure that children maintain safe relationships with their family and friends, where possible. Friends and relatives visit children at the home and children are transported to visit their relatives. Some children report positive experiences in seeing family and friends. However, children have unplanned contact with family and friends on a regular basis and staff and managers are unable to stop them. Consequently, children are not effectively kept safe from potential harm that may occur when with family and friends.

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

Managers and staff demonstrate that they are pro-active in ensuring that children are safeguarded. One child said, 'I feel safe here, it's a chilled out atmosphere here, I feel much safer than I did when I was living elsewhere.'

Impact risk assessments are completed prior to new children moving into the home to consider the management of their known risks and the impact on children already living in the home. Managers and staff liaise effectively with placing authorities to reduce the risk of harm to children.

Most children's risk assessments include details of the individual risks and the strategies identified to reduce risks. However, for one child no risk assessment in relation to family contact was evident which led to the child being exposed to harm. Managers, staff and social workers did not work effectively to address the risk for this child, in this circumstance, which is still present.

Children are regularly reported missing from the home. Children live close to their family and friends, and so managers and staff tend to know where children are, when they are missing. Managers and staff strive to maintain contact with children when they are missing and liaise with appropriate adults and agencies to ensure that children are safeguarded. However, there are some instances when missing from home records are not completed fully, or are not available on file, for instance when police carry out de-briefs. This means that information that may assist managers and staff in reducing the incidents of children going missing is hampered.

Managers and staff work hard to manage children's behaviour, such as, when they cause damage to their own or others property, physical target staff and use verbal abuse. Managers and staff have received appropriate de-escalation training and despite the intensity of some behaviours, restraint is rarely used. Positive behaviour plans are devised for individual children, however, these are not specific enough, for instance, in instructing staff to encourage positive behaviour from a child and not providing strategies of what could be done to help children and or showing the

child's involvement in the plan. Consequently, this does not help to promote positive behaviour.

Critical incidents are recorded and reviewed to offer managers and staff the opportunity to monitor the frequency of such incidents and whether things could have been managed differently. Children's views are sought and recorded as part of this learning exercise. However, the recording is not consistent in some cases, with information missing, and no clear record of outcomes. As a tool created to assist in developing practice and to protect children, the record does not capture all information making them less effective.

Staff and managers understand their responsibilities in reporting concerns of a child protection or safeguarding nature. The local authority designated officer said, 'I haven't had any concerns raised to myself in the last 6 months. From prior records I can see that previously there have been appropriate LADO referrals made and no specific learning has been identified for the home.' However, in talking to some agency staff, their understanding of their role in whistle blowing was not clear. This potentially places children at risk.

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

The interim manager is an experienced manager and there is plan in place to establish a permanent management team. However, there has been no registered manager for the home for over two years.

Leaders and managers acknowledge that an area for development is evidencing the impact the care provided to children has on children's progress. They are planning to put effective monitoring systems in place to measure and record children's progress. Feedback is obtained from social workers, staff, children and parents, and used to reflect on practice and procedures. The management review of the care provided identifies clear action points for improvement. This has led to a change in the homes statement of purpose, reflecting the needs of the children placed and their increased level of need.

Children's local authority care plans are followed and managers and staff liaise with social workers, their managers and other professionals to achieve this. The interim manager is in a unique position within the local authority as a service manager which means that communication is more effective where challenge is needed in respect of decision making.

Managers and staff are well supported and receive regular supervision. Senior staff have undertaken reflective supervision training and staff report that they find supervision helpful in discussing the needs of children and the impact of the work. Staff benefit from monthly reflective sessions with a clinical psychologist where children are the focus. This helps them to develop strategies to address matters

relating to children's care. The interim manager and staff understand the responsibilities of staff and supervision is used appropriately to challenge staff.

Staff receive a range of training which supports them in caring and supporting children. The interim manager has identified that contextual safeguarding training is a key training area for staff. However, the workforce development plan does not consider specific training such as, attachment and trauma, understanding life stories and the impact of controlling and abusive relationships in the context of grooming and exploitation. This training would benefit staff in responding more effectively to the children in their care.

Children's records hold relevant information for managers and staff. However, the records do not demonstrate that children are actively involved in contributing to their records. The interim manager is aware of this shortfall and the need to develop children's records further.

Managers and staff ensure that the living environment for children is safe, with staff having specific responsibility for monitoring and reporting on health and safety matters in the home. Cleaners are employed to maintain the cleanliness and hygiene of the home. Health and safety risk assessments and checks are up to date and demonstrate management overview.

## 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          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <p>The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if—</p> <p>there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and</p> <p>the registered provider—</p> <p>is an organisation or a partnership;</p> <p>does not satisfy regulation 28; or</p> <p>is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home.</p> <p>If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of—</p> <p>the name of the person so appointed; and</p> <p>the date on which the appointment takes effect.<br/>(Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii) (2)(a)(b))</p> <p>This relates specifically to the appointment and Ofsted registration of a manager.</p> | 31 October 2022   |
| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff</p> <p>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;</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 30 September 2022 |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                          |
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| <p>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and</p> <p>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.<br/>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(i)((ii)(iii)(iv)(vii) (b))</p> <p>This relates specifically to ensuring that there is a clear record of events when children go missing from the home and that risk assessments for children are updated when new risks are identified.</p> |                          |
| <p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that each child's relevant plans are followed;</p> <p>that, subject to regulation 22 (contact and access to communications), contact between each child and the child's parents, relatives and friends, is promoted in accordance with the child's relevant plans;<br/>(Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(d))</p> <p>This relates specifically to ensuring that any plans for children to have contact with family are agreed and in line with any other relevant plans.</p>             | <p>30 September 2022</p> |

## Recommendations

The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs. In particular, to ensure that staff receive appropriate training in relation to attachment and trauma, understanding life stories, the impact of controlling and abusive relationships in the context of grooming and exploitation. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

The registered person should ensure that children's records reflect their history, achievements and significant life events and that children are able to contribute to the record. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)

The registered person should ensure that children are supported through clear behaviour support plans to behave in socially acceptable ways and key work sessions are used to reinforce these plans. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.13)

The registered person should ensure that records of critical incidents are accurately recorded to ensure effective scrutiny of actions taken. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

The registered person should ensure that staff understand the procedures for whistle blowing. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.15)

The registered person should ensure that the homes independent living programme is reviewed and is suitable to be used to support children to transition to independent living. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27)

## 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 address:** London Borough of Hillingdon, Civic Centre, High Street, UXBRIDGE, Middlesex UB8 1UW

**Responsible individual:** Jan Major

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspectors

Colin Bent, Social Care Inspector

Zahara Salim, Social Care Inspector

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