

2490938

Registered provider: London Borough of Hillingdon

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

- The local authority owns and runs this home for up to five children.
- In the home's statement of purpose, the provider states that it cares for children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.
- The registered manager post has been vacant since April 2017.
- The registered managers of two other children's homes run by the local authority have jointly managed this home since April 2019.

Inspection dates: 28 to 29 August 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

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

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 12 March 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/06/2019	Monitoring visit	Not judged
12/03/2019	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
03/12/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25(2)(b)) Specifically, ensure that fire doors which should close automatically are able to do so; and make sure that the responsible person signs off the fire risk assessment and other risk assessments to indicate their satisfaction with them.	31/10/2019
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 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	31/10/2019

individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1)(2)(a)(b)(3)(a)(b)(c)(d)) Specifically, keep evidence of proof of staff identity and a photo.	
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Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Specifically, review the information displayed on the noticeboard and how signs are used around the home to make sure that these do not appear institutional and identify children as looked after.

- The registered person should ensure that children are provided with nutritious meals suitable for each child's needs. Where appropriate, children should be involved in choosing and preparing meals, and opportunities to sit together and eat should be promoted. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.8)

Specifically, consider how to meet this standard for meals other than just the evening meal.

- The registered person must specify the procedures to be followed and the roles and responsibilities of staff when a child is missing from care or away from the home without permission. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.28)

Specifically, make sure that each day the staff record what children are wearing, when there is any risk of them going missing, so that this information may be shared with the police and other agencies.

- The workforce plan should be updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home and 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)

- As outlined in 10.1, the registered person should plan staffing levels to ensure that they meet the needs of children and can respond flexibly to unexpected events or opportunities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.15)

Specifically, review the rotas to ensure that there are sufficient staff to allow them to interact with children, complete key-work sessions and/or take them on activities outside of the home.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Social workers talk positively about the home's quality of care and its impact upon children. A social worker said, 'Staff have managed to show the child that they are cared for'. Staff respect and meet the varied cultural and religious needs of the children. Staff support the children to develop a stronger sense of, and pride in, their identity.

Education arrangements for the children are speedily put in place. Most of the children have full-time education placements arranged for September. There is significant educational progress for those children who have previously refused to attend or engage in education. Those children who have recently arrived in the country are helped to learn English. This helps them to settle, integrate and make friends.

Most children do not go missing from the home. Those children with a history of going missing for long periods of time now do so infrequently and for shorter periods. This is a significant improvement to children's safety. When a child may require extra measures in order to protect them, such as not having access to their phone, staff help them to understand the reasons for this.

Staff help the children to understand why they are looked after. They encourage children to see their families and friends, when this is part of their care plan. A few of the children now enjoy better relationships with their family members, in some cases staying overnight with them, which improves their well-being.

Staff encourage children to take a proactive role in managing their health and well-being. Good links with support agencies ensure that children can get help with issues such as substance misuse. A social worker said that a child whom they had placed had 'completely turned around' due to the structure and support that they had received while living in the home.

Children enjoy eating their evening meals with staff. Staff encourage children to develop independence skills, including independent use of the kitchen for other meals and snacks. However, preparing meals for children, such as breakfast, could be a further opportunity for sharing a meal, nurturing children and encouraging healthier eating.

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

Children feel safe in the home. Through effective information sharing with other professionals and agencies, staff support children to move away from negative influences in the local area. This helps children to feel safer when out of the home.

Children are empowered by knowledge about how to improve their own safety. For example, staff arranged for the police to talk to children about how to protect themselves from knife crime.

Staff build positive relationships with children to develop an understanding of the particular risks to them, such as those children who are vulnerable to criminal exploitation by traffickers. Children say that they can talk to staff about any worries or concerns.

Staff understand the procedures for reporting allegations of abuse. Staff and the interim managers are proactive in sharing information with the local authority to effect change in any behaviour which places children's safety at risk. During their monthly visits, the independent visitor scrutinises children's safety and makes useful recommendations.

Staff recruitment is mostly robust. References are verified to make sure that people are suitable to work with children. Proof of staff's identity has not been filed, in the mistaken belief that this compromised data protection. However, children's homes regulations require proof of identity and photographs of staff.

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

The provider is actively seeking to appoint a permanent manager. Staff say that the interim managers are accessible and supportive. However, the home lacks the leadership of a permanent manager.

Staffing is now more stable, so the children experience consistency in those caring for them. Sufficient staff are now available for planned activities. However, at times, staff are stretched to cover all their tasks and have little time to take children on impromptu outings or to engage with them.

Staff training records require improvement. Files do not record all of the training that staff say that they have had and do not include the training of regularly used agency staff. Therefore, it is hard for staff and managers to know when refresher training is due and what training has been completed.

The building is generally well maintained. However, some fire doors do not close automatically. Also, staff have wedged some fire doors open, which prevents automatic closure. This compromises safety in the event of a fire. Managers have not signed off the fire risk assessment (and other risk assessments) to indicate that these contain a suitable assessment of risk.

Children like the building, their rooms and the garden. The building is clean and comfortable. A positive parenting decision has been made to gradually remove television sets from children's bedrooms. Some aspects of the communal areas of the home appear institutional, such as the information on a noticeboard and a few signs.

The staff have effective working relationships with the local authority and other agencies. A social worker said that staff 'are brilliant at keeping in touch with me'.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: Tony Zaman

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector:

Jacqueline Graves, social care regulatory inspector

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