

2541467

Registered provider: Barnardo's Services Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and operated by a registered charity. It provides care for up to four children. The home operates under a block contract arrangement with the local authority in which it is situated.

A new manager is in post and is in the process of applying to register with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 7 December 2022

Date of last inspection: 5 April 2022

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At these inspections, the inspector evaluated:

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

Inspector has 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

During inspection, the inspector did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care and safety of children or the leadership and management of the home.

The care of children

The home is warm and welcoming. Staff have decorated for the festive period and children have been encouraged to personalise their bedrooms. Children said they feel 'comfortable' and 'at home'. Locks are no longer in use on internal doors in the home. This provides children with a safe environment from which they can develop and make progress.

Poor matching processes have led to challenging dynamics between children in the home, which staff have been unable to effectively manage. This has led to children moving out of the home in an unplanned way. The manager has, however, taken important learning from this, and children currently live together harmoniously and are settled.

Children are now all accessing suitable education. Since the last inspection, the manager has effectively advocated on behalf of a child who was out of education. Staff have worked well with the virtual school and the local authority, offering robust challenge when necessary, to ensure that children's education needs are being met.

Children feel listened to and cared about. One child said, 'These [staff] are honestly the best adults I've ever known. I feel like I can trust them.' As a result, children experience nurturing, supportive care.

Special occasions and achievements are always celebrated. One child recently celebrated her birthday, and the staff created a pink balloon archway and decorated the lounge for a party. This child said she felt 'special' and another child reported feeling loved by staff.

The safety of children

The manager promotes a positive safeguarding culture that helps to protect children. Staff work closely with statutory agencies in order to promote multi-agency working. The manager has also taken steps to ensure that local authority care plans are up to date. As a result, children say that they feel safe and supported.

Staff respond well when children go missing from home. Staff follow the missing-from-home protocol and share information quickly with the multi-agency team. As a result, children are found and brought home quickly, reducing the risk of harm.

Staff understand their role in a range of safeguarding scenarios. However, they are not as confident with behaviour management approaches. This may have contributed to the police being called on several occasions to help manage children's behaviour. This could result in children being criminalised.

Physical intervention is rarely used, as the ethos of the team is a nurturing approach to care. However, written records still do not always include details necessary to meet regulation. Additionally, records are not written in a way which would be easy for children to understand. This could limit the opportunity for learning and reflection for both staff and children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

A suitably qualified and experienced manager is in post. Her application for registration is in progress. The manager has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of her team. She has started implementing positive changes and has a clear vision for developing practice.

Staff feel supported by leaders and managers. This promotes effective teamwork. One member of staff said, 'They [managers] will really do anything to help. Their door is always open.'

The manager does not yet have an effective system of oversight of training. This has led to lengthy gaps in staff training records. Although staff have completed some training that helps them meet the specific needs of the children, some mandatory refresher training, such as safeguarding and behaviour management training, is significantly overdue.

The manager has made improvements to the quality of children's case records. However, staff do not always sign and date important documents, and records are not always fully completed. In one child's record, the wrong gender identity and pronouns are used. This means that staff do not always have accurate information to support them in caring for children.

Staff receive regular supervision. Discussion is focused on children's needs and progress. Supervision also offers staff an opportunity to reflect on their practice and discuss any recent significant incidents. This helps staff to take learning from difficult situations and improve the care they provide for children.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/04/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/08/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
28/04/2021	Full	Inadequate

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, the 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 person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(b)(c)) Specifically, the manager must ensure that staff are signing important documents and that all records are completed in full.	30 March 2023
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 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record	30 March 2023

confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (3)(a)(iv)(v)(vii)(c)) Specifically, the manager must make sure that all staff are familiar with the behaviour management approach for each child. This should include appropriate de-escalation techniques. Also, records of restraint should be written in a way which clearly explains what has taken place, in a way which the child would understand. The duration of each individual hold should be included. Every attempt should be made to carry out a debrief with the child and these attempts should be noted.	
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; 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)(h)) Specifically, the manager should have a robust system in place to monitor staff training and effectively challenge staff when mandatory training is not completed within expected timescales.	30 March 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that records are reflective of children's identity in a non-stigmatising way. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraphs 14.4)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2541467

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Barnardo's Services Limited

Registered provider address: Barnardo's, Tanners Lane, Barkingside, Ilford IG6 1QG

Responsible individual: Stuart Ainge

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Nicola Shaw, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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